

IF IT BE OF GOD

**THE STORY OF THE
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**



PAUL GRISWOLD MACY

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THE STORY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

From an expert interpreter comes a forceful volume on the history of Christian co-operation and unity on the world scene. The author, who has been in intimate touch with the movement, now sketches its historic background and recent development with consummate skill.

Dr. Macy presents the tide of history for and against the movement toward church unity. He draws vivid pictures of the dangers which the leaders and men of self-sacrifice faced during dark periods of oppression and suffering through the terrible days of the Nazi regime and the Gestapo. He gives inspiring descriptions of the Christian underground's valiant and vigorous operation under suppression and of the young people who risked their lives to keep Christians in touch with one another in years of turbulence.

Then came the most important event in modern ecclesiastical history—the first As-

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by Paul Griswold Macy

The Story of the World Council of Churches



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TO MY WIFE
MARY ELDRIDGE MACY

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Foreword

If told that the greatest Christian of recent times in England, Archbishop William Temple, called the rising of a great world-fellowship of Christians "the great new fact of our era," many would say: "I don't see how he could say that." For the vast majority of Christians even now do not know much if anything about Christian co-operation and unity on the world scene. If asked to do so, they could write scarcely 500 words about the developments in the Christian Church over the centuries.

A very different type of person, but one with a wide knowledge of the modern scene, President Eisenhower, said some

years ago to a group of Christian leaders: "Gentlemen, unless we find a spiritual answer to the modern world challenges, we will all disappear in the dust of an atomic explosion."

This excellent condensed story of past and present efforts to achieve world community consciousness sheds a lot of light on one of the few hopeful things now going on in our divided world.

Dr. Macy has had long and intimate touch with the movement whose historic background and recent development he sketches with great skill. After several pastorates he was for some years a secretary of the provisional World Council organization in this country (known then as the American Committee for the World Council of Churches). He served first in New York and then had charge of its Midwest office in Chicago. He wrote the excellent report of the Oslo World Conference of Christian Youth. He helped to develop the special services which were held all over this country and in other parts of the world to dramatize the ecumenical fellowship forming in the World Council and related bodies.

He dealt with the problem of acquainting Church people with the significance of what was going on from more angles than the above activities would embrace. He led a local city ecumenical council in Evanston; spent some years lecturing in many parts of the country, particularly to theological students; took an active and very helpful part in making the World Assembly of the Churches at Evanston in 1954 the wonderful success it was; and has since been teaching on the faculty of a theological seminary in Chicago. In all of these ways he was an interpreter with personal knowledge, wide experience, and a gift of expression with both voice and pen.

If this is not evidence of the wealth of personal knowledge and experience he brings to the writing of this book, it may be mentioned that he did a great deal of editorial work for the American office of the World Council, inaugurated *The World Council Courier* and edited it for seven years. He was the first secretary of the "Friends of the World Council of Churches, U. S. A., Inc." Certificates of membership in the "Friends" signed by Paul G. Macy will be found in churches of many denominations throughout the country.

As one who has participated in most of the conferences and assemblies related to the World Council and its antecedent bodies for the past third of a century, I can say with assurance that this analysis and report is well balanced, accurate, and very readable.

Intelligent and conscientious Christians are in great need of the sort of information which this book contains. Not many of them realize the extent to which the nature of tomorrow's world depends upon the degree of Christian community which can be attained and made operative in today's world. Arnold Toynbee, the noted historian, sees the totalitarian Communist faith in man as the pawn of the state, confronting, on a world stage, the Christian faith in man as a child of God. Communists have already achieved a degree of world community consciousness and of unity in excess of the community consciousness developed by Christians. But theirs has within it the seeds of its own dissolution. With all its weakness and inadequacy the ecumenical movement has impressed this historian so much that he can see in it the hope that civilization will yet be saved by an ancestral church which it had so largely ignored.

The issue of this confrontation lies, in the final analysis, with informed and dedicated individual Christians. To those who would desire to be such, this book brings a most valuable kind of enlightenment as well as challenge.

HENRY SMITH LEIPER
Formerly Associate General
Secretary of the World
Council of Churches

Preface

In three years of service under the "Charles Henry Brent Lectureship on Church Unity"—speaking in forty theological seminaries, colleges, and universities, plus numberless churches, from coast to coast—I met with insistent requests for a book about the movement toward Christian unity among the churches which would meet these specifications: 1. avoid the use of terms which puzzle laymen and even some ministers; 2. be a concise but historically accurate account covering all the salient facts; 3. put in more permanent form some of the rich material which found only transient expression during the years of testing in World War II and its aftermath. I know

of no such book in spite of the many excellent volumes that have been written about various phases of the movement and one large, definitive history which is invaluable as a reference work.

A more decisive reason for writing is my deep conviction that hope for the survival of civilization is but a dim hope indeed apart from the realization of a world Christian community which more nearly corresponds to the pattern of the primitive Church. That primitive Church conceived its principal task to be "holding the world together" in spite of all the divisions of race, nation, and social status—*through Christ*. Anyone holding such a conviction is duty bound to make such contributions as he is able to the setting forth of the great strides toward unity which have been made in the last half century and to help people continue and further the work already begun.

The approach to unity by the path of united worship has not received the attention it deserves. A splendid brochure on the subject has long been out of print. The first chapter of the Appendix endeavors to fill this gap. Some great "ecumenical affirmations" and statements of those who had been "under the cross" of persecution and suffering will also be found in the Appendix.

Four people have made distinct contributions to this book. Two are authorities in the field—Georgia Harkness of the Pacific School of Religion and Henry Smith Leiper, former Secretary in America of the World Council of Churches and a leader in the movement for three decades. Both read the original draft and their suggestions have been incorporated. Dr. Leiper reread the manuscript in its final form and has written the Foreword. Two people made pertinent suggestions

and corrections from the point of view of those not directly connected with the movement, although interested: my son, Eliot E. Macy, is a writer; Irene M. Koch is not only a writer but has had experience as critic and editor. To all four I express my deep gratitude.

Former colleagues in the American office of the World Council of Churches have been most helpful and co-operative. Their assistance is greatly appreciated. Then, too, I have had the inspiration and co-operation of present colleagues in Bethany Biblical Seminary, whose witness to the cause of Christian unity—in word and deed—is noteworthy.

As one can well understand, I am most indebted to my wife, Mary, without whose constant help and encouragement these pages would never have been written.

PAUL GRISWOLD MACY
Bethany Biblical Seminary
Chicago, 1959

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And when they had brought them [the apostles], they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet have you filled Jerusalem with your teaching. . . . " But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. . . ."

When they heard this they were enraged and wanted to kill them. But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, held in honor by all the people, . . . said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you do with these men. . . . For if this plan or this undertaking is of men, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!"—Acts 5:27-39.

I.

To Begin With

"If It Be of God"

The Council of Jerusalem was enraged. Its orders had been disobeyed, its authority questioned, its dignity insulted. A band of enthusiasts, followers of one Jesus of Nazareth who had been crucified as a criminal, had dared—in spite of one imprisonment—to preach and heal in defiance of the edicts of the Council. Indeed, one of the members of this band had just declared that God had raised from the dead this Jesus whom the Council had sent to his death. He also said, "We must obey God rather than men." In righteous wrath the Council members wanted to kill Peter and his colleagues.

Fortunately, one member of the Council did not lose his head. The Pharisee named Gamaliel spoke a word of caution

in terms which suggest the only valid test that should be put to any movement in the field of religion. "Take care what you do to these men," he said, "for if this plan or this undertaking is of men, it will fail; but *if it is of God*, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!" That is the crucial test: is it of men or is it of God? If it is primarily the result of men's ingenuity, it will fail. But if it is the result of man's obedience to the leading of God's Holy Spirit, then it cannot be stopped. What is more, to oppose it—either actively, or passively by taking no action—means opposing the purposes of God.

Every church council, conference, assembly, or congress should be thus tested. According to Luke, the very first council on Christian unity (Acts, chapter 15) was most certainly of God, and that is why a split in the Church was avoided. In the letter which went out to the churches there is this memorable phrase: "It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us!" No wonder the council succeeded in preserving the unity of the Church.

Any honest appraisal must conclude that some of the later councils did not follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Are the councils and conferences of this twentieth century "of God"? Christians ought to know the answer. Is the whole movement, of which the councils were significant incidents, of God? If they *were*, then one *cannot be neutral* in respect to that movement. To do nothing makes one a stumbling block in the way of God's plan. These pages are written in the deep conviction that the ecumenical movement is of God. That is why church members ought to know its background, its achievement, its goals, so as to support it intelligently. If it is of God we dare not be against it.

The Word "Ecumenical"

Not a few have questioned whether the choice of the word *ecumenical* was inspired by the Holy Spirit. One commented to the effect that the word is "phonetically execrable and psychologically questionable, but it is etymologically incontestable, theologically estimable, and pragmatically inevitable!"¹

Is there some better word? The answer to that oft-repeated question is that there *is* a better word but we cannot use it without being misunderstood. That word is *catholic*, as used in the great creeds of Christendom, meaning *universal*. Unfortunately, the word has come to refer to parts of the Church Universal, not to the whole. To use the word *ecumenical* is but to revive a word which has had a long history. It derives from the Greek word for house, *oikos*. In the form *oikumene* it was used to describe the councils of the Church which represented the whole inhabited world. The old hymn puts it this way: "All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice." The word is used many times in the New Testament and is translated *world*. Now it has the connotation of the whole *household* of God and so is used to describe the movement toward the unity of the "One Holy Church throughout all the world" in which there are no divisions on the basis of color, race, nation, caste, or creed.

When We Say "Church"

The most common use of the word *church* is to designate a congregation of Christians in a local community, though the same word may refer to the *building* in which a congregation worships and it is not always easy to distinguish between the two. When it appears in the name of a congregation, such as

¹Attributed to Ross W. Sanderson.

The First Christian Church of -----, it is always capitalized. Another usage in some circles is found in the expression "I am going to church Sunday." Here it refers to a service of worship.

Again, the word may refer to an organized "communion" of local parishes which hold a common doctrine and polity, such as "The Methodist Church," "The Episcopal Church," etc. In this book when reference is made to the Churches, capital C, they mean the separate denominations.

The Church, with no descriptive adjective and with a capital C, is usually meant to indicate the total of all local, regional, or national bodies, i.e., The Church Universal.

Strangely enough, there is no ancient definition of THE CHURCH. The reality of it was so self-evident that no definition was thought necessary. Definitions began to appear in connection with controversy, and they came out of particular situations. Description may be better than definition. We need note here only the fact that our English word, although derived from the Greek *kyriake*—belonging to the Lord—translates the Greek word *ecclesia*—the *called out*. Going back a step further, that Greek word *ecclesia* translates a Hebrew word *Kahal*—meaning the "people of God." It expressed the unity of the Jews as *one people of God*.

II.

From Church to Churches: Diversity to Division

One in a Million

At the founding of the Christian Church—described in the Acts of the Apostles, chapters 1 and 2—we find Peter standing up “in the midst of the disciples” and we are told that “the number of names together were about a hundred and twenty.” The population of the Roman Empire at that time, according to Gibbon, was 120,000,000. So, each one of the early witnesses to the Christian faith was, literally, one in a million. Together, though but a tiny handful, they dared to proclaim the end of Imperial Rome when the “kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord.” *Together* is the important word. Disunited, the first Christians would have been overwhelmed and quickly forgotten in a pagan, totali-

tarian empire. United they shook it to its foundations. It was a Roman who reported to his capital that "these people are turning the world upside down." What kind of unity was theirs, these followers of Jesus, who were burned like torches in Nero's garden and thrown to the wild beasts in the amphitheater but never wavered in their witness? Do we need that kind of unity now? If so, how did it come to be lost? How can we regain it?

The Mystery of God's Will

"God wills unity."¹ That was at the heart of the early Church's method and mission. Not only did the first followers of Jesus feel themselves bound together in a deathless love "which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Colossians 3:14), but they knew they had been called to a ministry of reconciliation, the breaking down of dividing walls and the drawing of mankind into a unity that transcended all natural divisions. (Ephesians 2:14.) Indeed, they felt that the mystery of God's will was revealed in his purpose to unite all things in Christ (Ephesians 1:10) and they were urged to "live a life worthy of the calling to which they had been called . . . eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Paul could rejoice, even in his day, that it was no longer Jew or Gentile, the greatest opposites religiously; Greek or barbarian, so different culturally; bond or free, the opposite poles economically and socially; but one in Christ.

Unity Versus Uniformity

Unity, then, characterized the early Church, but not uniformity. The two words are often confused, even in some

¹*Faith and Order—Proceedings of the World Conference, Lausanne, 1927. The Call to Unity, p. 460.*

dictionaries which give them as synonyms. Uniformity is unity but not vice versa. There is no uniformity in the universe, on the contrary there is infinite diversity. But there is unity. It is a universe, in which all the diverse elements are held together in an ordered whole. Otherwise there could be no such thing as science.

A better figure is that of the family. One member may be light and another dark, one short and another tall. There may be the greatest differences in mental and physical capacities, in likes and dislikes. It is not a true family, however, unless there is a fundamental unity which binds it together. The binding force is love. That is precisely the state of things that exists in the Church-as-God-intended-it. It was the mark of the early Church. In it was the open secret of its power.

That the Church did not begin with a uniformity—of organization, of worship, or even of doctrine—is evident when one considers a few facts. At first, and for a long time, there were no New Testament or Apostles' Creed, no written documents at all. There was no "headquarters" with a resident staff. Though Jerusalem was a natural center for Christians—especially for those of Jewish background—because of its association with the life and death of Jesus, the apostles did not remain there as a kind of college of cardinals. Actually there was little concern at first for any kind of organization because the early Church lived in the expectation of the early return of its Lord. The apostles had no theological training. They just went out with a burning passion to share the good news that God had given mankind a fresh start. "All maxims and philosophies were reduced to the simple task of walking in the light since the light had come."

Naturally, each apostle's message was colored both by his own background and also by that of his hearers. To Jews, the

gospel was preached in terms of the Old Testament—a new covenant taking the place of the old. To Greeks, it was interpreted in terms of various prevailing philosophies. It would be hard to understand the existence of the discrepancies between the written Gospels had there been *uniformity* in the early Church. Only on the basis that there was a great freedom does it seem logical that such differences could exist. A study of the ancient liturgies reveals the same kind of diversity. In fact, the only important thing was to be a member of the *whole* Church. J. H. Nichols puts it:

Through all the scattered brotherhoods in the cities of Asia Minor, Africa and Europe there was this vivid sense of being *one* chosen community, overriding all distinctions of neighborhood, class lines, nationality, or culture. A man did not think of himself primarily as a member of this or that particular local church, as do so many American Protestants, but as a member of Christ's one body.²

The 20th Century in the Light of the 2nd

Someone in the second century wrote a letter to an individual named Diognetus. It contains a vivid account of the Christian community. After describing the kind of lives Christians lead—how they follow the manners and customs of the country where they dwell, obey its laws and even go beyond them, finding “every foreign land a fatherland and every fatherland a foreign land”—there is this striking summary: “In a word, what the soul is to the body, Christians are to the world. . . . The soul is locked up in the body, yet it holds the body together. And so Christians are held in the world as in a prison, yet it is they who hold the world together.”³

²From *Primer for Protestants*, p. 21. Used by permission of The Edward W. Hazen Foundation.

³From *The Apostolic Fathers*.

Compare that description with the situation in the twentieth century. Early in our century (1914) the world was falling apart. It desperately needed "holding together"—but what did the Church do toward that end? *Nothing*. The Church, counting all branches, numbered over 650,000,000 members. That is one Christian to every three or four non-Christians—not one in a few thousands as in the second century. It had billions of dollars in wealth. Its members held posts of authority and influence in the so-called "civilized" nations. Yet, for all its numbers, wealth, and influence, the Church was powerless to hold the world together. It did not even hold its own members together. Church members slew church members—even members of the same communion fought each other. The question of membership in the corporate "body of Christ" was seldom raised. Alongside the importance of national ties those of the "living community of the Living Lord Jesus Christ" did not figure. The sense of unity in Christ had utterly vanished.

Even suppose that, when war threatened, the Christians of the world had wanted to voice a united protest against the worldly, selfish interests that were dragging humanity to the edge of the abyss, how could they have gone about it? What agency was there that could have given expression to the Church's will? None. The basic unity that marked the early Church had become so broken that it could make scarcely a gesture toward holding the world together.

The Lost Freedom of the Spirit

It is a long and tragic story, the way in which diversities became divisions and the body of Christ was torn into fragments that we are accustomed to call denominations. Paul faced the threat of a split in the Church at the outset of his ministry. It was at that first Council of the Church in Jerusalem, men-

tioned earlier, that he had to contend with those who wanted to confine Christianity within narrow Old Testament limits. They sought a *uniformity* that would be gained by running the Gentiles through the Jewish mold. He won his battle for the "freedom for which Christ has set us free" and could later rejoice in the varieties of gifts, services, and ways of working which were all inspired by the one Holy Spirit.

Many things conspired to turn the Church away from this "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." At the outset some Christians began to use their liberty as license to hold utterly fantastic ideas which they tried to support by "sayings of Jesus" which were of dubious authenticity. To guard against excessive individualism it became necessary to set standards. That involved some kind of organization. The tendency of all human organizations is to crystallize into set patterns and then to be more concerned with preserving the patterns than in being true to the truth which inspired them in the first place.

Constantine, a Name to Conjure with

Then, too, as the Church became larger and stronger, it tempted powerful individuals to use the Church for their own ambitious ends. This was especially true of political life. Those in positions of power not only tried to use the Church but carried over into the organizations of the Church those methods which had proved successful in the secular realm. The Emperor Constantine illustrates this tendency. He was not even a baptized Christian when he called the Church to a Council at Nicaea (A.D. 325, the first of the seven ecumenical councils). It is certain that his concern was not primarily religious but political. The bishops were in his pay so there was a good attendance. No one would be rash enough to deny

that there were some excellent decisions taken at Nicaea, for there were leaders of undoubted piety among the delegates, but the gradual alliance of Church and state began there.

When Constantine made Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire, it greatly enhanced the prestige of the Church but at a great cost. The Church took on the coloration of the state. It began to seek unity through an enforced uniformity. It even accepted the aid of the state in compelling adherence to its decrees. The Bishop of Rome became more and more of a ruler. No wonder that many historians look upon the time of Constantine as the beginning of a "Babylonian captivity" of the Church—a disastrous alliance of Church and state.

West Broke with East

The greatest single break in the Christian Church came in the eleventh century. There had been growing jealousy between the two parts of the Roman Empire—the West with its capital in Rome, and the East with Constantinople as its chief city. In 1054 came the unlovely spectacle of the Bishops of Rome and Constantinople mutually excommunicating each other. The ostensible reason for the split was theological—the addition of a single word, *filioque* (and the Son), to the phrase "who proceeded from the Father" in the Nicene Creed by the Western Church, without the authority of an ecumenical council. In reality it was the result of a long history of friction and antagonism which was worldly and political, not theological. In spite of repeated attempts to heal the breach, the division became permanent.

Other Sheep of the Fold

There were theological differences that entered into the process of division, but we need not linger over them, for it

has become apparent in our day that they are not the vital points which stand in the way of unity. It is important to remember, however, that the positions of some who could not agree with all the pronouncements of the ecumenical councils would be considered quite orthodox in our day. Again, we think of the Church as expanding *westward* from Palestine, through the Greek-speaking world. Paul's missionary labors occupy the major part of the story of the early Church. Thus it is easy to overlook the fact that there was an expansion *eastward* as well, among people of the same Semitic background as the disciples. For example, in the first century there was established a great Church in Mesopotamia, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. It carried the gospel to India and China. That Church suffered horrible persecutions through much of its history and was almost wiped out. A remnant remains, however, and the "Church of the East and the Assyrians" is making a courageous attempt at rebuilding its scattered parishes.⁴ It belongs to the World Council of Churches. This Church is but one of several which, though thought of by others as being "schismatic," do not think of themselves as ever having separated from the main stream of the Church's life.

The Inevitable Reformation

Our story now follows the Church of the West, which continued its policy of concentrating power in a central authority, the papacy, in order to enforce a uniformity. Heresies, many of which would not be considered such today, were ruthlessly suppressed, sometimes by brute force. Paul's idea of the liberty of the spirit was held only by tiny persecuted minorities. The

⁴The Patriarch of the Church of the East and the Assyrians, His Beatitude, Eshai Mar Schimun, XXIII, has his headquarters in the U. S. A.

visible church, though it claimed divine origin and the possession of the "keys to the kingdom," was not exempt from the concept that "power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." What with the attempt to confine the free spirit of man within narrow limits, and the gross abuses which sullied the very name *Church*, the Protestant Reformation was inevitable.

When the dam of repression broke, there issued not one great river but innumerable streams. That was certainly not the intention of the reformers. They sought only to purify the Church, to return to New Testament principles. They would have been horrified at the thought that their action would ever tend toward the losing of a sense of oneness in the Church.⁵ Nevertheless, for almost three centuries there was a multiplication of denominations and sects, many of which have persisted to our day. Undoubtedly, some of the protests which led to the formation of new denominations had valid bases. Aspects of the gospel message had been forgotten or warped in the process of time and needed re-emphasis. The unfortunate part of it all was the fact that long after a particular emphasis was accepted by the Church in general, the organization making that emphasis persisted because it had gained a tradition and a history which was precious to its adherents. As time went on, there came to be greater divergences *within* single denominations—so far as basic matters of faith were concerned—than *between* denominations.

⁵Cf. d'Aubigne's *History of the Reformation*. "The Catholicity of the Reformation is a noble feature of its character. The Germans pass into Switzerland; the French into Germany; and in later times men from England and Scotland pass over to the continent and doctors from the continent into Great Britain.

"The Reformers in the different countries spring up almost independently of one another; but no sooner are they born than they hold out the right hand of fellowship. There is among them one sole faith, one spirit, one Lord. From their very origin the Protestant Churches form a whole body, fitly joined together."

III.

The Turn of the Tide

Co-operation Begins

About the end of the eighteenth century there came a definite turn of the tide and the process of division was halted. It was never completely stopped and even the twentieth century has seen many new church bodies organized, but they are the exceptions that prove the rule. The definite trend has been, for more than a century and a half now, toward co-operation and unity. The new spirit was a result of the concern for *evangelism* and *missions* that characterized the nineteenth century.

Prior to 1795 there had been *no organization* that bound Christians together across the denominational boundaries. In that year, however, members of the established Churches of

England and Scotland (Anglican and Presbyterian) united with Methodists and Independents to form the London Missionary Society. This was such an innovation that one leader, referring to it as a "blessed spectacle," rejoiced to "behold us here assembled to attend the funeral of bigotry." The announcement of this funeral was premature but the formation of the London Missionary Society was the first great step forward.

The Bible Societies and Sunday School Unions

The same concern for evangelism brought Christians together in the publication and distribution of the Bible. Anglicans, Free Churchmen, and Quakers united, in 1804, to form the British and Foreign Bible Society. This Society gave financial assistance in the formation of branches in Germany, Ireland, Sweden, and *the United States*. By 1816 there were 100 small Bible societies in our country and the national organization, the American Bible Society, was then established. One indication of the distance we have traveled since then, on the road to unity, is the fact that in early board meetings of the Society it was not possible to have prayer offered. The Bible could be read because, thank God, that was the same for everybody. But if prayer were offered, it would be in accordance with the pattern of one of the denominations, and feelings still ran too high to risk giving offense.

The evangelism of young people, and their training in the Christian life through the Sunday school movement, also brought people together across denominational lines. The American Sunday School Union was founded in 1824. By the middle of the century there were state and county Sunday School Associations and finally, in 1889, the first World Sun-

day School Convention was held in London. The present "World Council of Christian Education" continues the movement which started then.

The Evangelical Alliance

One organization which had a profound influence on the whole movement toward unity is the Evangelical Alliance. It was formed in London in 1846 by 800 leaders from many different countries. This alliance was of individuals and was not an attempt to unite the churches themselves. Its avowed object was "to confess the reality of the one Church, not to create it." At the end of the first week's session of this new Alliance a resolution was introduced which would have barred slaveholders from its sessions. The matter was finally left to the national branches to decide, which meant that in the United States the Alliance could not be established until after the Civil War. The Evangelical Alliance was the forerunner of other movements toward unity which largely supplanted it. A stiff doctrinal basis also contributed to its decline but it left a permanent mark, in the institution of the Universal Week of Prayer, still observed, as in 1846, during the first week of January.

World Christian Youth Movements

A whole book could be written on the contribution of Youth movements to the unity of the Church. The story begins with the formation of the British Young Men's Christian Association in 1848. Three years later a student brought the Young Men's Christian Association to the United States where it spread in the colleges. The Young Women's Christian Association began in 1872, the Intercollegiate Movement three years later. Finally, in 1895 at Vadstena, Sweden, the World

Student Christian Federation brought together existing organizations in Great Britain, the United States, the Scandinavian countries, and Germany. This Federation has done more in furnishing leaders for the movement toward Christian unity than any other single organization. From the outset its purpose was to unite the Student Christian Movements in the world, to collect information regarding the religious conditions among the students of all lands, and to promote the following lines of activity: (a) to lead students to become followers of Jesus Christ, (b) to deepen their spiritual life, and (c) to enlist them in the work of extending the kingdom throughout the whole world.¹

Because the formation of the World Student Christian Federation was so much the handiwork of one individual who was to play a major role in the ecumenical movement, this is the place to record a thrilling story of the way in which God calls men into his service.

From a Shoe Salesman to an Archbishop

Just after the middle of the last century, a Chicago shoe salesman felt the call of God to go preach the gospel. Dwight L. Moody became the greatest evangelist this country has known. It is significant that very few people, even those familiar with his name and his work, know to which denomination he belonged. On one of his trips to England, in 1873, he won a British scientist, Henry Drummond, to the task of preaching the gospel in the great universities of England. Eleven years later there were among the converts of Henry Drummond some Cambridge students who were to be known as the "Cambridge Seven." They visited Northfield, Massachu-

¹For the full story of the *World's Student Christian Federation*, see book of that title by Ruth Rouse.

setts, where Mr. Moody had established his famous schools. One of the seven, named Studd, who was destined to become a Lord Mayor of London, was a famous cricket player. He went to speak at Cornell University where a young sophomore who was not particularly interested in religion thought he would like to hear a famous athlete talk about it. That student was John R. Mott, and the address he heard converted him to a life of service in the expansion of the Christian Church. In 1888, turning down fellowships abroad, Mott began student secretary work. He was not satisfied to bring together Christian students in his own country; he wanted to unite them around the world. It was largely his vision, courage, determination, and organizing ability that created the World Student Christian Federation. He served as its general secretary for 25 years and then as its president for twenty more.

Although it takes us ahead of our story, we may properly insert here the fact that John R. Mott was responsible, at least in part, for winning to the ecumenical movement one of its very greatest leaders. Thinking that the missionary forces would not send enough young people to the great Edinburgh Conference which began the modern ecumenical movement, Dr. Mott secured a number of young men as ushers. Among them was a young Oxford don by the name of William Temple. It was there at that Conference that William Temple got the vision of Christian unity which was to shape his whole life afterward. He was destined to become not only one of the great theologians of our day and the Primate of the Church of England (Archbishop of Canterbury) but the first president of the provisional organization of the World Council of Churches. Thus were linked, in a wonderful chain of Christian influence, a shoe salesman of Chicago and an Archbishop of Canterbury.

IV.

The "Wellspring" of the Twentieth-Century Ecumenical Reformation

Messengers of the Cross Are Apostles of Unity

This chapter might well be printed in bold-face type. It can never be too strongly stated that the origin of the modern ecumenical movement was in *foreign missions*.¹ Less than two centuries ago, among Protestants, foreign missions had to fight for existence. The familiar argument was that, if God had wanted the heathen to be converted, he would have looked after the matter. Though everyone who knew the gospel was *himself* a product of foreign missions, that was because he was fortunate enough to be in the group that God willed to have it. Today, "Christianity has a bad conscience unless it is

¹This was written before seeing William Richey Hogg's *Ecumenical Foundations, A History of the International Missionary Council and its nineteenth-century background*. This definitive history is documentation of my statement.

missionary.”² We may paraphrase that statement and say truly that because of foreign missions the Church has a bad conscience until it is united.

Facts of geography make for unity among missionaries themselves. They work in fields far from home, among people of a different culture. It is natural to seek the companionship of those from the same country even if they be of a different religious tradition. Fellowship brings understanding. Then, too, the territories in which foreign missionaries work are usually vast and there is little danger of the competition that is so often a fertile ground for the cultivation of differences. But the principal factor is that, for those who come out of the darkness of paganism into the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ, this in itself constitutes such an overwhelming experience as to make denominational differences pale into insignificance. Missionaries become conscious that their message is weakened by division. Converts see little meaning in denominational loyalties as compared to loyalty to the whole Church.

Edinburgh—1910

We have already seen that the very first organization of co-operation across denominational lines was the formation of the London Missionary Society in 1795. We now record, as the *beginning of the modern ecumenical movement*, the council of missionary leaders which met in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1910. This was not the first world gathering of the missionary forces but there are several reasons why it is the most significant ever held up to that time. All former conferences were held on the basis of “whoever will, let him come.” This con-

²From an address, heard by the writer, by W. E. Hocking of Harvard University.

ference was composed of delegates appointed by the missionary boards of the churches. The basis of representation, strange as it may seem, was financial—one delegate for the first \$10,000 spent on missions and an additional delegate for each additional \$20,000. It was due to the organizing genius of John R. Mott—someone said, "Mott presided and pervaded"—*that a continuation committee with a budget* was appointed.

The continuation committee wisely chose Dr. Mott as its chairman. Right after the Edinburgh meeting he started a vigorous program of visitation to the mission fields and the setting up of national Christian councils. In 1921 the committee became organized as the International Missionary Council. Mott served the committee and the Council as chairman for thirty-two years.³

Jerusalem—1928

The Holy City in Holy Week! This was the setting for the next great missionary conference, that of the International Missionary Council. The delegates followed, so far as possible, the footsteps of our Lord between Palm Sunday and Easter. They made the journey from Bethany to the Mount of Olives and kept a tryst there on Maundy Thursday. When, on Good Friday, there was a celebration of the Lord's Supper in the very city where it was instituted, the scruples which usually keep Christians from uniting were put aside. For once it was truly a united service of communion.

Since Jerusalem is the home of one of the oldest patriarchates of the Eastern Orthodox Church, this conference marked the more active participation of that great communion in the

³John R. Mott, *Addresses and Papers*, Vol. V., *passim*.

ecumenical movement. It was significant also in the larger participation by delegates from the churches on the mission fields. They demanded greater recognition as indigenous churches, entitled to the same consideration in the Church Universal as the churches which had planted them. In response to their demand a statement was formulated which set forth the conditions under which a church may be said to be *living and indigenous*. It is so important, and, at the same time, such a good test for the "home" churches that we quote it in full:

A Church, deeply rooted in God through Jesus Christ, an integral part of the Church Universal, may be said to be living and indigenous:

1. When its interpretation of Christ and its expression in worship and service, in customs and in art and architecture, incorporate the worthy characteristics of the people, while conserving at the same time the heritage of the Church in all lands and in all ages.

2. When through it the spirit of Jesus Christ influences all phases of life, bringing to His service all the potentialities of both men and women.

3. When it actively shares its life with the nation in which it finds itself.

4. When it is alert to the problems of the times and, as a spiritual force in the community, courageously and sympathetically makes its contribution to their solution.

5. When it is kindled with missionary ardor and the pioneering spirit.⁴

Tambaram—1938

The next meeting of the International Missionary Council had been planned for Hangchow, China. Japan's invasion of Manchuria, and the eventual involvement of China in the war, made that impossible. Some wanted to give up the conference altogether but the less fearful won the day and the location

⁴Used by permission of *The International Review of Missions*.

was changed to India, in a mission school at Tambaram, not far from Madras. In spite of the war in China, Japanese joined with Chinese in Christian fellowship. For the first time, the delegates from the "younger churches"—those on the mission fields—equalled in number the delegates from the home bases. They played a distinguished part in the deliberations of the conference, and they pressed hard for unity.

In the ten years since the Jerusalem meeting, new challenges had come to mission lands. They now faced not simply the old paganism but the challenge of militant, atheistic ideologies which were held with the passion of dynamic religions—Communism, National Socialism in Germany and Italy, and the imperialistic religion of Japan. The development of a strategy to meet these challenges was the major consideration. As a part of it, the younger churches insisted on a greater measure of unity than did their elders. They went so far as to adopt a separate statement of their concern for unity. Among its moving sentences are these:

Disunion is both a stumbling block to the faithful and a mockery to those without. We confess with shame that we ourselves have often been the cause of thus bringing dishonor to the religion of our Master. The representatives of the Younger Churches in this Section, one and all, gave expression to passionate longing that exists in all countries for visible union of the Churches. . . . Visible and organic union must be our goal. This, however, will require an honest study of those things in which the Churches have differences, a widespread teaching of the common Church membership in things that make for union and venturesome sacrifice on the part of all. . . . Loyalty, however, forbids the Younger Churches to go forward to consummate any union unless it receives the wholehearted support and blessing of those through whom these Churches have been planted. We are thus often torn between loyalty to our mother Churches and loyalty to our ideal of union. We, therefore, appeal with all the fervour we possess, to the Missionary Societies and Boards and the responsible authorities of the Older Churches, to take this matter seriously to heart, to labour with

the churches in the Mission Field to achieve this union, to support and encourage us in all our efforts to put an end to the scandalous effects of our divisions, and to lead us in the path of union—the union for which our Lord prayed, through which the world would indeed believe in the Divine Mission of the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.⁵

The story of the International Missionary Council and its contributions to the ecumenical movement merits a whole volume.⁶ If we turn now to two other movements, it is because they are unique in that they are *movements of the Churches as Churches*. Up to this point in our story, all the significant steps toward unity in modern times had been taken by individuals, or groups of individuals, within the separated Churches—to accomplish special tasks, such as publishing the Bible, promoting Sunday schools, and uniting in work for young people, developing missions. No conference had been held to which the delegates were appointed by the churches (communions or denominations) themselves. So, when *Churches as Churches* began to meet together, the ecumenical movement entered a new and exciting phase. The main reason for dating the modern movement with 1910 is that one of the two movements of the Churches stems directly from that Edinburgh Conference. The other was indirectly inspired by it.

⁵*Madras Conference Series*, Vol. 4, pp. 376-378.

⁶See footnote 1.

V.

The "Faith and Order" Stream

Bishop Brent's Vision

Great movements begin in the faith and vision of a God-directed soul. Charles Henry Brent, first missionary bishop in the Philippine Islands for the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, had a prophetic vision while at the Edinburgh Conference. He had not wanted to attend but went from a sense of duty. Once there he was deeply stirred, but also deeply troubled. He noticed that although the members of the Conference could talk together about the practical problems of the mission field, they avoided discussion of the really important matters that marked the divisions of the Church. This seemed to him to be all wrong. He believed that people never got close to one another until they understood each other. His

vision was of a conference at which the Church would face frankly the deepest differences between them, in an atmosphere of mutual trust and good will, and would explore the ways in which differences might be reconciled.

Upon his return to the United States, Bishop Brent laid before his own Church, at its General Convention in October, 1910, his dream. The response was immediate and enthusiastic. Plans were proposed which called for a conference "following the general method of the World Missionary Conference, to be participated in by representatives of all Christian bodies throughout the world which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, for the consideration of questions pertaining to the Faith and Order of the Church of Christ."¹ The General Convention voted, unanimously, to adopt the plan and extend the invitation. It appointed a committee to carry the project through. *So began the Faith and Order Movement.*

"The Wind Bloweth Where It Listeth"

The spirit of God moved upon other Churches that same year, 1910. The day before the action of the Episcopal Church two other American denominations, acting independently, took steps toward unity. The National Council of Congregational Churches and the International Convention of Disciples of Christ established commissions to consider any overtures for union in view of the possibility of fraternal discussions of unity suggested by the Lambeth Council of Anglican Bishops in 1908. That very same year the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. appointed a permanent commission on Church Cooperation and Union; the Church of England in Australia appointed a commission to seek conferences on unity with

¹*Faith and Order, Proceedings of the World Conference, Lausanne, 1927*, pp. vii, viii.

other Churches on that continent; and the clergy of the Eastern Orthodox Church, meeting in Athens, took important action concerning the furtherance of general Christian reunion.²

Lausanne—1927

Five years had been set as the length of time necessary to prepare for the first conference on faith and order. The committee chosen to bring the Churches³ together was headed by Bishop Brent. The secretary was a consecrated layman, Robert Gardiner, who gave unsparingly of his talents, time and money. Delegations were dispatched to interview the heads of the Churches in Europe and Eastern Asia. By 1913 thirty commissions had been appointed. In 1914 the world was engulfed in war, and seventeen years were to elapse before the fulfillment of Bishop Brent's dream. Finally, in August, 1927, the first world conference of the churches to discuss the nature of the Church and its ministry, especially the points which had set its branches at variance, met in Lausanne, Switzerland. In his opening sermon Bishop Brent said:

In our hearts most of us are devotees of the cult of the incomplete—sectarianism. The Christ in one Church often categorically denies the Christ in a neighbouring Church. It would be ludicrous were it not tragic. . . . When Christians accept Christ as supreme, they cannot but walk as companions and friends. . . . Christ's agile feet journey to the human heart along many and diverse paths. . . . Let us keep the purpose of unity firm in our hearts and look on all Christians . . . as brothers beloved. It is thus that, by practicing unity, we shall gain unity.⁴

It could scarcely be expected that those who had been going in different ways for so many centuries would suddenly find

²See *Christian Unity*, by G. J. Slosser, p. 351.

³Following the custom in ecumenical circles, the word *church* is capitalized when it refers to a denomination, a communion, or the Church Universal.

⁴*Faith and Order, Proceedings etc.*, 1927, pp. 8-10.

themselves in complete agreement. Nor was there any attempt to seek a unity through uniformity. What the delegates did find, to their great joy, was that the things which held them apart became progressively less important and the things which they had in common were even greater than they had dared to hope.

To carry on from Lausanne, a Continuation Committee of both clerical and lay members (representative of all the principal branches of the Church except the Roman) was appointed. The movement thus took permanent form, and has continued to this day. The first chairman of the Continuation Committee was Bishop Brent. He had given so lavishly of his time and strength that his health failed shortly after Lausanne. The following year he died and his body was taken to Lausanne for burial. The second chairman was William Temple, then Archbishop of York, and he remained chairman until his death in 1944.

Edinburgh—1937

Overlooking the city of Edinburgh stands the ancient Cathedral of St. Giles, now the High Kirk of the Church of Scotland. There, in the same place where Bishop Brent had caught the vision which brought the Faith and Order movement into being, the Second World Conference on Faith and Order assembled for worship in August, 1937. Among the 414 official delegates and alternates, from 122 church bodies and many communions in 43 countries, were those who had been present ten years earlier at Lausanne. As the message of Lausanne was read, they followed the familiar words and realized that they were already far along the road to unity because of the preparation of mind and spirit over the intervening period of ten years.

The questions discussed by the delegates were such as these:

What Faith do we hold in common? Why do we understand and use the Sacraments so differently? What really is the Church? What are the chief obstacles to a united church? What do we mean by the *Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* as so often spoken in our prayers? Are our differing conceptions a reason for continuing different Churches today?

Through common worship, conference, and personal contacts the delegates aimed not only at increased friendship among the Churches, or increased co-operation in the tasks immediately confronting the Church, but at the goal of a united Christendom in which the treasures held by each in their separation may find full expression in unity. Here again the search was for freedom and variety, rather than for uniformity—for "unity in diversity." The results of the deliberations of the Conference [are] published in a volume of over 300 pages.⁵

The heart and mind of the Conference found historic expression in an "Affirmation of Unity" which has had wide usage in the churches ever since. It is quoted in full in the Appendix, p. 175.

⁵*Story of the World Council of Churches*, by P. G. Macy, 3rd ed.

VI.

The "Life and Work" Stream

"North, East, West, and Söderblom"

Such was the popular description of the first world conference of the third stream of the ecumenical movement, that which concerned the life and work of the Church, for to that stream Nathan Söderblom—the name means "Flower of the South"—Primate of Sweden, stood in the same relationship as did Bishop Brent to the Faith and Order stream. There are striking likenesses between these two great leaders. Brent was the son of a country parish priest of the Church of England in Canada. Söderblom was the son of a country parish priest of the Church of Sweden (Lutheran). Both were able scholars. Both were also accomplished organists. One wonders whether their love for music, which speaks a universal language, had

something to do with the breadth and inclusiveness of their Christian spirits. One other fact about Söderblom is of interest to Americans. As a university student he attended a conference at Northfield, Massachusetts, where he came under the influence of the evangelist, Dwight L. Moody, and also John R. Mott whom he later called the "Napoleon of the Student Christian Movement." There is this entry in his diary, as he left the conference in Northfield, "Lord, give me humility and wisdom to serve the great cause of the free unity of Thy Church."¹

Before considering the first conference of this third "stream" of the ecumenical movement, there are interesting incidents in the preceding years, which deserve consideration.

Belligerent Christians in 1918

Toward the end of the first World War, Archbishop Söderblom, together with the Primates of the other Scandinavian Churches, issued to the Churches of the world an invitation to meet in neutral Sweden and discuss the tragedy of a Christian Church rent asunder by human slaughter. The invitation expressly provided that the subjects to be discussed were not political; further, that the entertaining churches would so arrange matters *that delegates from belligerent countries would not meet each other, in public or in private*. In spite of these provisions, the barriers of war were so great that the invitation was refused—even by the Federal Council of Churches in the U.S.A.² It was a tragic disappointment to Söderblom and his colleagues.

Nothing daunted, however, as soon as the war was over, they set about to bring together the Churches of the world to dis-

¹See *Nathan Söderblom*, by H. G. G. Herklots, p. 11.

²Data from correspondence files.

cuss the problems of life and work which had been great enough in 1910—social and political—but which had been intensified a hundredfold by the war. Now they *were* joined by leaders in other countries, notably by those in the Federal Council of Churches and the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, which had been organized just at the outbreak of war. Key American leaders were Frederick Lynch, Henry A. Atkinson, and Charles McFarland. For six years they labored in and out of season in preparation for an epoch-making conference.

Stockholm—1925

Storkyrkan, the Cathedral of Stockholm, was the scene of a solemn procession on a morning in August, 1925. One who was present described it as the centuries marching together—

. . . the ancient with the modern; the heirs of Athanasius with the children of Luther and Calvin; magnificence with simplicity; the pomp of ritual with the austerity of the Puritan; black robes with scarlet; golden crowns with bared heads. Many of the multitude who filled the cathedral could hardly sing as the procession moved forward, nor were they ashamed of their tears as before them in swift pageant was unrolled the tragic but glorious history of the Christian Church.³

There were 1,000 delegates at Stockholm in 1925, from 37 countries, gathered to concentrate the mind of Christendom on the mind of Christ, as revealed in the Gospels, toward the urgent social questions of the day. They believed that the only real solution to their problems would be found in the message of Jesus Christ. So, they set themselves to discover his will and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to find the ways in which his will could be applied by the churches.⁴

³From *Life and Work*, The Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work, Stockholm, 1925, by Edward Shillito.

⁴*The Stockholm Conference, 1925, Official Report, passim.*

Bishop Brent was chairman of the Committee on International Affairs. In presenting its report he made a significant—since he was Chaplain-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Forces—and often-quoted statement: "The Christian Church if it be so minded can, in the name of Christ, rule out war and rule in peace within a generation. *I may be a fool, but if so I am God's fool.*"

Stockholm wrote a new chapter in Church history. A continuing organization was established to carry on the work there begun. Four years later this continuing organization became the "Universal Christian Council for Life and Work" and headquarters were established in Geneva, Switzerland, with branches in Sweden, England, and the U.S.A. For the first time in centuries a large portion of the Christian Church around the world had an official agency for doing together what could not possibly be done in separation.

Oxford—1937

The problems posed by World War I did not lessen as that tragic event receded in time. By the opening of the third decade in this century the Church was confronted with the problem of religious freedom in the face of the growing totalitarian state. It was with good reason that the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work called a conference on "Church, Community and State" to meet at Oxford, England, in July, 1937. Delegates from forty-five nations, including many prominent laymen and representing 119 Churches, met under the shadow of a pagan secularism that was expressing itself in exaggerated nationalism, imperialism, fascism, and atheistic communism. Major emphases in the deliberations of the Conference were the disintegration of modern society, the collapse of standards, the disappearance of time-honored

sanctions, and the waning of spiritual authority on the part of the Church itself. There was an atmosphere of crisis and a corresponding urgency toward redemptive action which was felt from beginning to end. Through a program of addresses and group discussion, and above all through the simple services of prayers, meditations, and hymns, which opened and closed the day's sessions, prejudices melted, understanding grew, and at the close of the Conference definite pronouncements were made which became a veritable charter of the life and work of the Churches in this generation.

That it is the Christian's duty to test every political and economic system in the light of his understanding of God's will; that the Church must set standards for society instead of permitting society to dictate standards to it; that the Church should have freedom to seek and teach the truth; that the state is not supreme but that all Christians owe their ultimate loyalty to God; and that "*War is a particular demonstration of the power of sin in this world and a defiance of the righteousness of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and him crucified*"—these are a few of the highlights of the message from Oxford.⁵

At Stockholm the delegates had dealt with problems in terms of general principles. At Oxford they applied those principles to concrete issues. Some of the statements adopted for transmission to the constituent Churches have served as background for all later discussions of social problems. The Conference found the world "anxious and bewildered and full of pain and fear." Though it, too, was troubled, it was *not unto despair*, for hope was "anchored in the living God" and in our Lord who declared, "I have overcome the World."

⁵*The Oxford Conference, 1937, Official Report*, p. 162.

Again, as at Stockholm and Lausanne, the delegates found themselves closest together in the experience of common worship. This was true of the simple services of prayer, meditations, and hymns, which opened and closed the day's sessions, and also of the great celebration of the Lord's Supper, according to the rite of the Church of England, to which all baptized Christians were invited as communicants. All but a very few, whose consciences did not permit them to make any exception to established rules, found that prejudices melted and understanding grew as they shared in the central sacrament of the Christian Church.

VII.

Converging Streams

The Movements toward Unity Move to Unite

It was not by accident that the two movements toward unity—Life and Work, and Faith and Order—met in the same country and during the same summer. Though the two had gone along in somewhat parallel lines, many Christian leaders were active in both. It became clear to them that the movements belonged to each other. In dealing with a practical problem of the application of the gospel to life, the question would arise, "Is this the business of the Church?" Then that would lead to the further question: "What *is* the Church?" These questions are certainly in the field of faith and order. On the other hand, it was apparent that there was little value in discussing problems of faith and order in a kind of rarefied,

theological atmosphere unless the conclusions reached were translated into action.

So it was that small groups, as early as 1933, began to discuss the interdependence of the movements and the possibility of combining them. In 1935, at a meeting set up by Henry Smith Leiper of the American office of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, in Princeton, New Jersey, the representatives of five world-wide bodies (Faith and Order, Life and Work, International Missionary Council, World Sunday School Association, and World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches), it was determined that an effort should be made to set up a world-wide organization of the Churches. Accordingly, a Committee of Thirty-five was appointed to explore the possibilities. This committee, which was at first informal, was "regularized" by the Life and Work, and Faith and Order movements. It met just before the conference of 1937 and presented to both (Oxford and Edinburgh) the proposal that the two separate movements come together to form a World Council of Churches. This Council was thought of as carrying on the work of the two movements, but much more besides. It was to be a continuing, permanent organization of the *Churches* themselves, with responsibility for the whole range of the ecumenical task.

Even the most optimistic advocate of this forward step could scarcely have foreseen the unanimity with which the proposal was received. It was adopted by both conferences with but three dissenting votes, two at Oxford and one at Edinburgh. Indeed, one delegate who voted in the negative at Oxford reversed himself at Edinburgh. Here, certainly, the guidance of the Holy Spirit was manifest. 1910 saw the first movement on the part of the Churches toward unity; 1937

marks the merging of the two movements in which the Churches were officially represented.

Each conference appointed seven representatives and as many alternates on the Committee of Fourteen which was charged with drafting a plan for the new organization and submitting it to the member Churches. When this Committee met, right after Edinburgh, it decided that such a far-reaching and momentous step ought not to be planned by so small a group. It called for a conference of delegates, duly chosen by the churches that had been represented at Oxford and Edinburgh to meet the following year.¹

Twenty Churches Choose Ten Delegates

How should the score of Churches in the United States pick the ten delegates allotted? That did not look easy. In fact, it was decided that an "electoral conference" should be held in Washington, D. C., in which all the Churches which had had delegates at Oxford and Edinburgh should participate. Three days were allowed for this conference. In two hours the job was done. The ecumenical spirit had again prevailed. By a gentlemen's agreement, one delegate represented several Churches. Larger denominations gave way to small ones in Christian courtesy. The Protestant Episcopal Church selected as a lay delegate the only woman member of the conference. The Friends (Quaker) delegate represented several small denominations. The example had been set for the United States by the Canadians who were allowed only two places for their four strong denominations. There the Baptists agreed that the Anglican delegate should represent them and the Presbyterians chose the delegate of the United Church.

¹According to the official reports of the two conferences.

A Council of Hope versus a Counsel of Despair

May 12, 1938, is a great date in Christian history, in spite of its being undistinguished in the minds of most Christians. Indeed, if one should scan the newspapers of the day following, in any city of the world, he would probably find an account of the meeting of the Council of the League of Nations, to debate the fate of a member nation, Ethiopia. Haile Selassie, the Emperor, pleaded with the League to save his nation from Italian aggression but the Council washed its hands of all responsibility. That marked the final collapse of the League which had been a noble attempt to hold the world together by political means.

On the very same day, eighty leaders of Christendom, representative of all the great communions save Rome, completed plans for an organization, which, in the Providence of God, might do what diplomats and politicians had failed to accomplish—hold the world together through the Church of Christ. *Without a single dissenting voice*, they adopted a provisional constitution and plan of organization for a World Council of Churches. These delegates represented 130 branches of the Church Universal. They had come from the widest diversities of worship, church order, and creed. Their decision might have been worded in the language of the first council on unity: *It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us*—to set forth this Constitution and plan of formation. What with man would have been impossible, with God was possible.

The meeting at Utrecht was, for the most part, unnoticed by the press of the world. Yet, in the long view, May 12, 1938, will be known in history far more for what was done at Utrecht than at Geneva. At Geneva it was a *counsel of despair*; at Utrecht a *council of hope*.

The Shape of a World Council of Churches

The constitution drafted at Utrecht defines the Council as "a fellowship of Churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour." This phrase had been used in the original invitation to the Churches to meet at Lausanne in 1927. There is a considerable divergence of views as to just what it means. Perhaps that is just as well, for it was not intended so much for a creedal test as an expression of the central concepts of the Christian faith, the Incarnation and the Atonement. (Some could have wished that it might have been put in Paul's glowing declaration that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.")

The constitution makes definite the fact that the Council is a *fellowship* of the Churches, that it can never become a super-Church. Its authority to act on behalf of constituent Churches is only "in such matters as one or more of them may commit to it." Further, it is specifically stated that "the World Council shall not legislate for the Churches; nor shall it act for them in any manner except as indicated or as may hereafter be specified by the constituent Churches."

The functions of the Council are: (1) to carry on the work of the two world movements, for *Faith and Order* and for *Life and Work*; (2) to facilitate common action by the Churches; (3) to promote co-operation and study; (4) to promote the growth of ecumenical consciousness in the members of all Churches; (5) to establish relations with denominational federations of world-wide scope and with other ecumenical movements; (6) to call world conferences on specific subjects as occasion may require, such conferences being empowered to publish their own findings.

The principal authority of the Council is the Assembly of 400 members,² meeting ordinarily every five years and composed of the official representatives of the Churches, or groups of Churches, adhering to it. A Central Committee, to consist of not more than 90 members chosen from the Assembly, carries the work of the Council between sessions of the Assembly, meeting ordinarily once each year. Part of the functions of the World Council are provided for in the appointment of commissions, under the authority of the Assembly, which report to the Central Committee and, finally, to the Assembly itself. In both the Assembly and its Central Committee, one third of the members should be lay persons, both men and women.

²Later increased to 500, then 600.

VIII.

“In Process of Formation” —The Prewar Years

A Lively Embryo

The plan of formation adopted at Utrecht provided for a *Provisional Committee*, to be composed of the original Committee of Fourteen plus alternates and not more than three additional members from each of the merging movements. It also provided that everything which should be done in bringing the Council into being, prior to the first official assembly, should be *provisional*. It was not foreseen that this “process of formation” period would be ten years long, years of amazing developments and strenuous activity. Someone was to remark later, on observing the World Council in process of formation, that if the Council were an embryo (and in the strict sense it

was only that) it was the liveliest embryo the world had ever seen. That so much could be done, only a small part of which we can describe because lack of space forbids, was due in part to the fact that the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work did not wait until the completion of the World Council but immediately turned over to the Provisional Committee its work, together with offices and staffs in Geneva, Sigtuna (near Stockholm, Sweden), and New York.

The Invitation to the Churches

The Provisional Committee, in the Autumn of 1938, sent the proposed Constitution, and an invitation to join the Council on the basis of it, to all the Churches which had been represented at Oxford and Edinburgh. Along with it went an explanatory memorandum that had been prepared by Archbishop William Temple of England who had been elected chairman. This memorandum made clear the fact that the Council "is not a federation, as commonly understood, and its Assembly and Central Committee will have *no constitutional authority whatsoever* over its constituent Churches. Any authority it may have will consist in the weight which it carries with the churches by its own wisdom." In explaining the doctrinal basis, the memorandum said: "It is an affirmation of the Incarnation and the Atonement. The Council desires to be a fellowship of those Churches which accepts these truths. But it *does not concern itself with the manner in which these Churches interpret them*. It will, therefore, be the responsibility of each particular Church to decide whether it can collaborate on this basis."¹

¹*The World Council of Churches, Its Process of Formation, Reports and Minutes of the Meeting of the Provisional Committee, Geneva, 1946, pp. 180-182.*

Relationship to the Parent Stream

From the outset, the converging streams of Life and Work and of Faith and Order, now uniting in a World Council, were conscious of their origin in the missionary stream and of the need for the closest collaboration with the International Missionary Council. The Provisional Committee chose as its chairman the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, who had participated in all the major conferences and led in the drafting of the statements at Jerusalem, Madras, Oxford, and Edinburgh. For one of its vice-chairmen it chose John R. Mott, the president of the International Missionary Council. Then, at its meeting in Tambaram (Madras) at the end of 1938, the International Missionary Council chose Dr. Mott again for president. Further, the Provisional Committee chose, as one of its own secretaries, a secretary of the I.M.C., William Paton of England, to serve with W. A. Visser 't Hooft of Holland (General Secretary) and Henry Smith Leiper of America (Associate General Secretary). In a sense Dr. Paton, as Secretary of the I.M.C. and an Associate General Secretary of the Provisional Committee, personified the growing together of the two organizations.

As the Darkness Deepened

The "appeasement" of Adolf Hitler at Munich and British Prime Minister Chamberlain's assertion that he had "achieved peace in our time" did not dispel all the threatening clouds of war. When the Provisional Committee met in January, 1939, it was necessary to provide a secretary for "Refugees' Affairs" because of the number of non-Aryan Christians who were fleeing from Nazi persecution in Germany and Austria. In spite of the situation, the Committee set 1941 as the date for its first Assembly. It recognized the gravity of conditions,

however, and decided to co-operate with the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches in calling a conference of experts who should "consider what action is open to the churches and individual Christians with a view to checking the drift towards war and leading us nearer the establishment of an international order."

In April eleven German Church leaders, mostly of the so-called "German Christians" who went along with the Hitler regime, issued a statement against "every supranational or international Church structure, whether in the form of Roman Catholicism or of World Protestantism as a *political denaturing of Christianity*." There were anti-Semitic statements also. In the face of this, the officers of the Provisional Committee asked the constituent Churches to consider seriously a declaration of their belief in the spiritual unity of all who are in Christ, without regard to race, nation, or sex. A memorandum on "The Church as an Ecumenical Society in time of war"—based on the Oxford Conference statements—was widely distributed. It called attention to the challenge which war would present—"the first to break out since the Ecumenical Movement has found a definite expression, and described the task of prayer and preaching, the keeping of brotherly relations between the Churches and the duty to prepare for a just peace."²

Practical Ecumenism

Thirty-five leaders from eleven countries—including experts in international law—met informally in Switzerland for five days in the middle of July, 1939. Because their labors did not—in fact, could not at such a late date—serve to avert war,

²*The Ten Formative Years*. Document issued for the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

this conference has never received the attention which it merits. There were terrific tensions. Two Germans, officially "on vacation" in Switzerland, were among the group. That complicated matters but the growing reality of the ecumenical fellowship and the Christian discipline of the members of the conference enabled it to labor through to agreement on a memorandum to the Churches, which is one of the finest ever issued. It set forth guiding principles for the Christian solutions of international problems and the establishment of a just international order, principles with which the world has not yet caught up. It called attention to the tasks which the Churches must undertake: the task of true Christian prayer and preaching that is centered in the righteousness of the kingdom; the maintenance of brotherly relations between the churches *in spite of propaganda*; the continued work for peace; the counteracting of all hatred; a ministry to the victims of war.³ In the light of later world events, these words from the report are especially significant:

We believe that no decision secured by force of arms will be just and that out of the evil forces thereby set in motion, more evil is bound to come. We believe that decision by negotiation, conference, and methods of conciliation should always be an available alternative method. We believe that such procedures should be adopted free from the menace of force.

Christus Victor

This was the theme of the First World Conference of Christian Youth which met at Amsterdam, Holland, in August, 1939, just on the eve of war. The Provisional Committee had a large share in holding it, in co-operation with other Christian world youth organizations. Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, General

³*Ibid.*, p. 13.

Secretary of the Provisional Committee, presided at the sessions which brought together 1,500 delegates from more than sixty countries. They undertook to explore the meaning of the motto, *Christus Victor*—Christ is triumphant—in a fellowship which cannot be broken by racial differences, political disagreements, or even death itself. No one can tell all that God said to that generation of youth at Amsterdam, but he did speak and, as they came away, they knew that the conference had been well named. The young people declared that "just at the time that the nations of the world are falling apart, the Churches of the world are coming together."⁴

⁴*Christus Victor*, Report of the World Conference of Christian Youth, Amsterdam, 1939, p. 237.

IX.

“In Process of Formation” —War Years

Consecrated Imagination and Unremitting Toil

Some of the young people who had been at Amsterdam were still on the journey home at the outbreak of World War II. The World Council's provisional organization, especially the office in Geneva, was plunged into emergency activity which had not been foreseen but which was undertaken with consecrated imagination and unremitting toil. It was determined, at once, that the ecumenical relationships which had been established must be maintained at all costs.

By the time of the outbreak of war fifty Churches—denominations—had accepted membership, a remarkable response when it is remembered that some Church bodies meet in authoritative assembly but once in three or four years. As late

as January, 1940, it was possible for the Administrative Committee to hold a meeting in Holland but that was the last time until hostilities in Europe were ended. It established an "ecumenical commission for the chaplaincy service to prisoners of war." This was the first step in a program that was destined to develop into tremendous proportions as the war went on.

Back at Oxford in 1937 that Conference had said: "If war breaks out, then pre-eminently the church must manifestly be the church, still united as one body of Christ, though the nations wherein it is planted fight one another."¹ In what was really a "conquest of the impossible" the Church was able, through the agency of the embryonic World Council, to fulfill this declaration to an astonishing degree.

Known only to God are all the gigantic labors of Visser 't Hooft (Dutch), Schönfeld (German), Ehrenström (Swede), de Weymarn (Estonian refugee), Freudenberg (exiled German diplomat), and others of the staff at Geneva. In spite of the barriers erected by war and hate, they kept Christians in touch with one another in ways that seem almost miraculous. In the face of all the difficulties, they not only maintained but even strengthened the ecumenical ties.

Incredible appear the missionary journeys, the comings and goings of these modern apostles across war frontiers. Time after time, Dr. Schönfeld journeyed into Germany to bring back reports of the "confessing churches" that stood so valiantly against a pagan totalitarianism. "I could not sleep on the nights when Hans was gone," said Dr. Visser 't Hooft, not knowing each time but what that trip would be the last. The Geneva staff shared in a ministry to prisoners of war, to interned aliens, to refugees. They wrote epistles like the

¹*The Oxford Conference, 1937, p. 41.*

apostles of old, for many of the situations repeated for modern Christians what those of the first centuries experienced. They maintained an international press and information service which gathered and distributed reliable religious news from one end of the earth to the other. They themselves were living epistles to the Christian communities of Europe whose people needed fellowship and friendship as never before.²

Building the Church Out of the Churches

The building of Christians together across the barriers of war was a new thing, the work of those who felt they had a mandate from God to maintain Christian fellowship. It witnessed to the power there is in the *fellowship of the Spirit in the bond of peace*. In the midst of disruption and chaos, the churches found that they were becoming *the Church*. A report from Geneva in 1941 told of the constant evidence given that in the midst of a crashing civilization there was a veritable rebirth of the Church. It became smaller in numbers but more definitely what it was intended to be. One German church leader put it thus:

By the force of external conditions, and by spiritual necessity, the church is forced to become truly the Church in the New Testament sense; that is, a Church which does not enjoy the favour of the mighty and the great, but which is rich in spiritual goods and lives by the strength of sacrificial and brotherly love.

A new sense of unity bound together the churches which faced common dangers. Some came together after long years of separation or even conflict. Unity suddenly ceased to be a beautiful ideal and became a spiritual necessity.³ A new

²The foregoing is based upon promotional pamphlets of the American Committee for the World Council of Churches.

³*The World Council Courier*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 2-3.

ecumenical attitude was born out of the travail of persecution and hardship. The dream of those who had taken the early steps toward unity was being realized.

Behind Barbed Wire

Outsiders sometimes referred to the Council as "the World Council for Prisoners of War." This is an indication of the part that the ministry to those behind barbed wire played in the life of the Council in war years, and even after. The "Ecumenical Commission for the Chaplaincy Service to Prisoners of War" was organized in 1939 and by the summer of 1940 was in full swing. A major achievement was negotiating the transfers of clergymen prisoners so that the larger camps should have pastoral service. Thousands of Bibles, books, sermons, leaflets, and Communion Service equipment were distributed to the "parishes behind barbed wire."

The American Bible Society came to the aid of the Council in the provision of Bibles, New Testaments, and Gospels. It furnished a staff member so that a department for prisoners of war could be organized. By 1945 the annual distribution of Scriptures among prisoners of war reached a total of 126,000. One gets an idea of what it meant to have a world organization of Christians in the fact that, at the height of the struggle between Russia and Finland, Bibles were printed in Finland, but in the Russian language for use among Russian prisoners of war, paid for by money from America, and arranged for by the World Council office.

Public Enemy No. 1

Few people realize to what extent the ecumenical movement was a sort of Public Enemy No. 1 to the Nazi government. Confirmation of the fact is contained in a pamphlet,

issued with official approval, entitled *The Reich as a Task*. Referring to the "idea of the universal church as the idea of a community which has to stand above the nations of the world," and also to the idea of "humanity" the pamphlet says:

"National Socialism has had to assert itself over against both these ideas. The idea of humanity has been overcome comparatively quickly by the outburst of national consciousness which is almost comparable to a natural force. . . . Christianity, based on centuries of old, often reversed tradition, but especially based upon its claim to be mediator between God and man, has retained not only religious, but still unfortunately political positions of its spiritual power. . . . We must continually work with gigantic patience and equally gigantic caution until the men in our Reich finally recognize in its true significance the natural and accordingly divine superiority of membership in a nation to the arbitrarily selected membership in a confession."⁴

There you have it.

The Gestapo had special orders to interfere with the work of the Council and the passage of its members to and fro. When Paris fell, the Gestapo confiscated the Library of Dr. Boegner, head of the French Protestant Federation and a vice-chairman of the Provisional Committee of the World Council. It was sent to Berlin for inspection. Eventually it was returned *minus* the books relating to the ecumenical movement. Despite all attempts at suppression, however, the Christian "underground" kept in vigorous operation.

The Bible "Code" Helped

Many devices were used to keep Christians in touch with one another. One avenue of communication was via the representatives of the International Red Cross who, by the Geneva convention concerning prisoners of war—and the Nazis kept

⁴*Ibid.*, 1, No. 4, p. 1.

the convention for the most part—as neutrals were permitted to inspect the prison camps on both sides of the line.

While it was dangerous to carry written messages, those which were a matter of memory could escape censorship. This is where a knowledge of the Bible helped in making available a kind of code. A group of Dutch pastors were thrown into prison because they had stood against Nazi persecution of the Jews. One of these pastors got a message through to Dr. Visser 't Hooft in Geneva. It was simply this: "Philippians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2." "I want you to know, brethren, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole praetorian guard [in this case the Gestapo] and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ; and most of the brethren have been made confident in the Lord because of my imprisonment, and are much more bold to speak the word of God without fear. Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed on and triumph, as it did among you, and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men; for not all have faith."

Through "Sublime Hours"

Sometimes those in safe America, far removed in space from the scenes of utter horror and chaos, realized with pangs of conscience that they were also far from the heights of spiritual insight attained by men and women in the midst of the struggle. Yet, through the ecumenical fellowship, they were able to partly enter into moving experiences. Out of the heart of conquered territory there came one day in 1942 a letter which might be labeled "The Epistle of _____ in the Twentieth-Century Testament!" Here are some moving paragraphs from it:

The whole of Europe is passing through the crucible of fire and sword. European unity is not being made by a just distribution of raw materials, it is being made by an equal distribution of suffering. Mothers and wives are weeping everywhere. The eyes of young people are glowing everywhere with suppressed rage. And they are not just waiting for the hour of vengeance; they are waiting for something bigger. The hope of suffering Europe bears within it the seeds of a new world.

We do not believe that humanity is on the downward path. Czechs, Poles, Norwegians, Dutch, Belgians, French, Serbs, Greeks, are not just conquered people, they are the "John the Baptists." . . . When the sand of the European arena is sufficiently soaked in their blood, the hour of the victory of the spirit of tomorrow over brutal force will sound.

Our mission is to wait and to recover from our redemptive humiliation. And we are doing so. The Christian Church will have remained faithful to her Master; she will not have bowed down before Caesar.

We are going through sublime hours, because they are hours of salvation and redemption. Do not pity us; simply understand the tragedy of the hours which the world is called upon to go through. Do not spend your time in preparing the terms of the future peace treaty; sanctify yourselves with us so as to be able to speak and act tomorrow when the world will have to be invited to reconstruct on the ruins of today.

We are told that you Anglo-Saxons are laying up stores of food in your barns to distribute them to us tomorrow. We, for our part, are laying up stores of spiritual food for the world of tomorrow; for our minds and hearts are under pressure, and *we do not wish to live on anything except that which is eternal.*⁵

Young and Courageous

Week in and week out, during the occupation in France, a courier would slip between the barbed wires that cut it off from Switzerland, bringing news of the churches in conquered territory. These young people risked their lives in this service

⁵*Ibid.*, 1, No. 4, p. 1.

to the ecumenical movement. Many did give their lives that Christians might be kept in touch with one another and their hands upheld by the consciousness of belonging to a fellowship in which "when one member suffers, all the members suffer with it."

The word CIMADE became—in France and finally throughout the Christian world—a synonym for sacrificial, courageous action on the part of youth. When thousands of helpless evacuees were crowded into refugee camps at the foot of the Pyrenees—destitute, despairing, and without the most elementary facilities for decent living, the "*Comité Inter-Mouvement d'Aide aux Evacuees*" (C.I.M.A.D.E.) sprang into action, under the direction of Mlle. Madeleine Barot.⁶ Through frost and snow, on foot and on bicycle, CIMADE workers went everywhere, into camps, among the ruins and in the cellars. They organized meals in the open air, shared the hard life of the evacuees and refugees, distributed garments. Most of the CIMADE members were French Protestant youth but they were joined by some from Switzerland and even a few from America. After the whole of France was under the heel of the Nazis, CIMADE still continued its work, much of it underground. Many a Jewish child was saved from the clutches of a rabid anti-Semitism by these heroic young people. Here are a few sentences from the liturgical service that united the workers across all distances:

O Lord, come and rebuild what has been destroyed; come and renew our life.

O Lord, hasten the coming of Thy kingdom. He whose witness is true says:

Behold, I come quickly.

⁶Later secretary of the World Council of Churches' Commission on the Life and Work of Women in the Church.

Lord, show Thy mercy to all workers who are in loneliness; grant them the aid of Thy Holy Spirit. Uphold them in unity with us. Be the bond of peace between those who work in lonely places.

Help us to find in the Church which surrounds us friends and councilors.

We think before Thee of all those who are in tribulation or in any difficulty, of all those who strive along with us, of all those who pray with us although far away.⁷

“This Is My Body”

A group of French prisoners of war gave a touching testimony to their attachment to the church, by sending to the Reformed Church at Lyons a parcel of flour which they had saved out of their meager rations. They asked the Lyons Church to make with it the bread for the Christmas communion service, as a material symbol of the communion of the Church in Lyons and the Church behind barbed wire, in the same bread and Body.⁸

A letter from another group of French prisoners in a German camp to their Christian friends expresses the same idea:

If we are raising our voices to address this message to our brethren in France, it is after having confessed the Holy Universal Church which God Himself brings together, and given thanks for the food which the Spirit gives us day by day through our Mother, the Church, in particular for that *liberty according to the spirit* which He communicates to those who are *prisoners according to the flesh*. Captivity has been a grace for us all. It has made us understand that, although materially separated, we are not simply a collection of individual believers from all parts of France, but the Church in a war prison camp.⁹

⁷*The World Council Courier*, 6, No. 1, p. 2.

⁸See *International Christian Press and Informative Service*, Feb., 1944.

⁹*Courier*, 1, No. 4, p. 2.

The World Council's First Martyr

In the summer of 1943 a bold new venture in ecumenicity resulted in the addition of many workers to the World Council staff, but it entailed martyrdom for the first volunteer for the new type of service. Theodore C. Hume, pastor of the Congregational Church in Claremont, California, was sent by his denomination to serve the World Council in whatever way seemed best, the denomination to pay his salary. With his eventual destination Geneva, then inaccessible, Ted Hume set out for Stockholm which was a center for ecumenical contacts. Just as the civilian plane on which he was traveling from London neared the shores of Sweden, it was shot down by a Nazi war plane. The pilot managed to land his plane on the sea but on the way to shore it struck a submerged rock and sank. As so often happens in the case of martyrdom, many volunteered to take Ted Hume's place. Not only that, but his tragic death highlighted the action of his denomination and the example was immediately followed by other Churches. The World Council began with a tiny staff; by the end of the war the Council overflowed three buildings and two temporary barracks.

No Less Significant

The working together of the Churches in the embryonic World Council was such a new and unique thing that it is easy to so magnify those activities as to forget other ecumenical agencies, especially the International Missionary Council whose achievements were no less significant. Within a few weeks, during the spring of 1940, about one eighth of all the mission stations in the world were cut off from communication with, and support by, the home bases. These 120 mission stations,

each with many local churches, were in forty countries, on every continent except North America. "Orphaned missions" they were called. The International Missionary Council went to their rescue and its record of activity is a glorious one. Not a single mission station was closed or missionary withdrawn for lack of support. All in all, a total of about \$6,000,000 was raised from the churches which could give aid, and distributed to the needy mission stations without regard to race, creed, or denomination.

The I.M.C. also functioned as the agency for relief and reconstruction in the countries of Asia where there was devastation. In the United States the agency created (by the Federal Council of Churches and the Foreign Missions Conference) to gather funds for this work became known as "Church World Service" but it worked through the I.M.C. and the World Council for their distribution.

An Annual Report That Thrills

A little glimpse of the manifold work of the World Council office in Geneva can be gained from the following excerpt of an annual report issued in the summer of 1943. Mail, even airmail, was a matter of months, if it got through at all, so, the short sentences were relayed by cable.

Contacts were maintained with the majority of churches on the Continent.

Nine countries were visited by Geneva Secretaries.

The Study Department has emphasized the need of keeping churches in touch with the thought and the life of other churches, with particular stress on problems of the war and the postwar world.

During this period the Chaplain's Service for prisoners distributed 140,000 Scriptures, books, and brochures in 27 languages, to deported workers and to prisoners of all nationalities.

The Refugee Committee says that the work of salvaging refugees in France is facing growing difficulties and dangers, but with help from Sweden and Switzerland, and particularly from French Churches, the work is being carried on.

Refugees of all faiths in Switzerland are being supported by American contributions.

The Bible Department is distributing Scriptures in all languages to refugees where a severe shortage of Bibles exists, and is also trying to preserve those Bible societies which the authorities have stopped. The latest society which has been suppressed is the Czechoslovakian.

The circulation of the Christian Press Service has increased and now reaches fourteen countries in Europe and eighteen other countries.

The Reconstruction Department reports progress. An investigation is being made concerning the present and the future needs of afflicted churches, and discussions concerning integration are being conducted in the Central Bureau.

While on a recent visit to Budapest, the World Council Secretary, Nils Ehrenstrom, inaugurated the Ecumenical Council: representatives from Reformed and Lutheran Churches already appointed, with positions left for Orthodox. Leading laymen taking an active part.¹⁰

"We've Had the Wind of God in Our Sails"

The experience of the war years was given vivid expression in a report made by Dr. Visser 't Hooft, at a meeting in New York May, 1945. In describing the way in which the young movement had met the impact of a global war, he said:

So great have been the opportunities of the past few years that if we had not had an ecumenical church capable of functioning, though still "in process of formation," we would practically have been forced to create one to do the tasks at hand.

When the war broke out the ecumenical movement was still trying to find its way and much patient planning and educational work seemed called for. There were grave fears that the ecumenical program might break down under the stress of war. Was it saved by the efforts of the leaders in New York, London, Geneva? No. On the Continent, at

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 3, No. 2.

least, it was saved by the churches themselves. The strength for the task at hand did not go out from Geneva, but came to Geneva from the fighting churches. Why did interest become so keen under the stress of conflict? Because the churches discovered that world-wide participation in the work of the Church of Christ was not just a holiday activity of people who like to go to conferences in Switzerland. They discovered that the Church is an absolute essential, that a sense of universality and world-wide community is essential to the fulfillment of the vocation of the Church. "Once again," they said, "we have a Church that is truly a Church." They heard a voice that spoke on their behalf—they recaptured the wonderful sense of "belonging"—belonging to a fellowship that was world-wide and knew no barriers of creed or nation. It has not been necessary to "push" the ecumenical movement—the churches have been pushing us. *We've had the wind of God in our sails.*¹¹

¹¹*Ibid.*, 5, No. 1.

X.

“In Process of Formation” —Postwar Years

A Flood Tide of “Displaced Persons”

It was hoped that with the end of the war there might be an easing of the refugee problem. Actually, it was greatly increased. To the mass of 9,000,000 displaced persons, the terrible legacy of Hitlerism, was added an even larger refugee problem created by action of the victorious powers. The Potsdam Conference provided for the removal of Germans from Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland in an orderly manner. However, the German economy and the speed with which the provision was carried out made the move anything but orderly. In vain did the Provisional Committee of the World Council protest that policy and the brutalities with which the transfers of population were made. A pitiful horde

streamed westward until there were eventually 15,000,000 homeless in Central Europe.

A staff member, reporting from Germany, told of refugees perishing on the roads from Poland to Germany in a death march not unlike that of Bataan. Whole sections of Central Europe presented the aspect of one huge Belsen with people dying by the roadside and around railroad stations. Newborn babies were being wrapped in newspaper and in places infant mortality approached 100%. Toward the end of 1945 it became clear that more people in Germany were likely to die from exposure and exhaustion than were killed in the war. In some towns the burgomasters gave orders for able-bodied men to dig graves which would be needed later on when the low-calorie diet made them too weak to dig. A hundred suicides in German towns of from 1,000 to 2,000 population were not uncommon and, for the first time, German pastors were taking their lives.

It was estimated that 6,000,000 homeless people were members of Protestant or Orthodox churches. This presented a mandate to the World Council. In October, 1945, the Council established a "Division of Material Aid" in the attempt to save people from death by starvation and exposure. There was no working agreement among the *great powers* to adequately care for war's victims; but the *Churches* could agree to work together, and did, in a magnificent co-operative effort. Though sometimes the relief seemed pitifully small in comparison with the need, it was a gigantic enterprise and it was carried through on a scale that would have been utterly impossible but for the existence of an ecumenical organization like the World Council.¹

¹*Courier*, 5, Nos. 2 and 3.

Ecumenical Sharing

The World Council had hoped to give its main attention, after the war, to the rebuilding of Christian institutions—restoring ruined church buildings, re-establishing Christian organizations that had been forbidden by the Axis powers, the training of pastors and lay workers, the production of Christian literature. As early as 1942 plans had been drawn up and submitted to the Churches of several countries. From a department with but one secretary there eventually developed the Department of Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid, with eighteen secretaries and hundreds of workers. (The second half of the title comes from the merging, with the World Council's department, of the "Central Bureau of Inter-Church Aid" which had been founded after World War I and, led by Dr. Adolph Keller of Switzerland, had performed a superb ministry during the intervening years.)

As we have seen, the desperate plight of refugees—to say nothing of the bombed-out families who were just as homeless—and the failure of governments to work together in adequately caring for the need meant the concentration of the Department upon material aid for many months. It never lost sight, however, of its main objective and steadily pressed toward it.

The guiding principle which determined the policies of the Department was that the task of reconstruction should be conceived as an *ecumenical* task in which *all* the Churches would participate to the limit of their ability in order to rebuild the whole fellowship of Churches in the World Council. This meant that the participating Churches agreed to co-ordinate their policies and activities in order to make certain that all

needy Churches received adequate help; that the Churches would not confine their help exclusively to the churches belonging to the same denomination or confession; further, that the desires and the autonomy of the receiving churches would be taken into full consideration.²

A slogan that expressed the principle tersely was: "From all who can help to all those who need help." Pastors and religious leaders in the stricken areas were made members of the committees on distribution. The decisions made were based upon need, not upon denominational affiliation. Need, however, was qualified by the application of a further guiding principle, that efforts must not be directed so much toward the replacing, just as it was, of that which had been destroyed, but to the construction of *what is necessary to revive the Church*. "To draw up the catalogue of losses sustained by the Churches in the war or because of foreign oppression will not be enough," said one memorandum, "we must give practical expression to the new vision granted to us of the Church's mission in the world."

From a list of six projects the work grew to include twenty-one. Just to name them gives a glimpse of the scope of the task undertaken: "Christian institutions; Aid to pastors (salaries and re-equipment of homes); Holiday Health; Christian Education; Theological Scholarships; Youth Work; Literature and Paper; Evangelization and Home Missions; Exchange of Christian Personnel; Christian Social Service; Refugees and Displaced Persons; Material Relief; Transport; Ecumenical Loan Fund; and General Needs of the Churches."³

²*The Ten Formative Years*, p. 33.

³*Ibid.* p. 35.

From Baby Bottles to Barracks

Infant beds and bottles for a tuberculosis home for children in a castle in Heidelberg, Germany; former army barracks converted into places of worship, parsonages, and parish houses; the *Casa Locarno*, ecumenical rest center for tired, overworked European pastors; prefabricated frameworks for "rubble churches"—these are a few of the items, among hundreds, with which the Department of Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid dealt in its ministry to the victims of "man's inhumanity to man." A sizeable volume would be needed to do justice to the record. To list the names of those who served so sacrificially—and those still serving—would leave unsung the deeds of countless heroes of the faith. Nothing comparable had ever been done before. Not since apostolic times had there been as great a demonstration of a fellowship in which "when one member suffers, all the members suffer with it."

Even those who were in need themselves, shared with the less fortunate. At one time a relief shipment of food, valued at \$5,000, was offered to the Netherlands relief committee. The World Council received a reply, asking that the food go to Germany as a gift from the Protestant Churches of Holland. That committee said, "We can get along, but we want supplies to go to those whose situation is much worse than ours."

"Heifers for relief" was a project started by the Church of the Brethren in the United States. There were some tolerant smiles on the faces of city dwellers in the committee when the proposal was first made. It was not long before they had smiles of pride in being connected with so worthy a project, whereby the decimated herds of Europe were replenished and milk again made available for little children. A group of Christians in Dayton, Ohio, sent a plane-load of hatching eggs

to Warsaw, Poland, with this declaration: "When the shells carried by this plane burst, it will be with life, not with destruction!"⁴

Together Again

In February, 1946, the Provisional Committee could meet once more, the first time since January, 1940. It would not have been surprising if there had been moments of embarrassment when members who belonged to countries on opposite sides of the world conflict met each other. The surprise was that "it was no surprise at all"—to quote Bishop Eivind Berggrav, Primate of the Church of Norway. It was he who expressed the feeling of all those who had "endured hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ" when he said: "In these last years we have lived more intimately with each other than in times when we could communicate with each other. We prayed together more. We listened more to the Word of God. . . . During the war Christ has said to us, 'My Christians, you are one.'"⁵

A high spot of the meetings—the Executive Committee of the International Missionary Council was held in conjunction with that of the World Council's Provisional Committee—was a great ecumenical service in the historic Cathedral of St. Pierre in Geneva. There thousands listened to addresses by Pastor Martin Niemöller, Bishop Berggrav, and Chester Miao of China, one of the delegates to the I. M. C. meeting. The Archbishop of Canterbury led in the opening prayers; Archbishop Germanos of the Greek Orthodox Church read the Scriptures in Greek; Dr. Alphonse Koechlin, President of the Swiss Protestant Federation, offered prayer in French. Then,

⁴*Courier*, 6, No. 3.

⁵*The World Council of Churches*, Geneva, 1946, p. 14.

in the addresses, there was a demonstration of ecumenical feeling, for the German spoke in French and the Norwegian in German.

The most important action of the Provisional Committee was the decision to hold the first Assembly of the World Council toward the end of August, 1948. It was an act of faith for, although 92 Churches in 33 countries had by now voted to join, postwar conditions made travel difficult and recovery seemed slow. The theme chosen for the Assembly was: "The Order of God and the Present Disorder of Man"—later shortened to the now familiar "Man's Disorder and God's Design." Invitations were received from the United States, Denmark, and Holland. Because several world meetings of denominational bodies were scheduled, the place finally chosen was Amsterdam, Holland.

The Committee decided to join with other international bodies engaged in youth work in convening a second world conference of Christian youth, after the pattern of the Amsterdam Conference in 1939. At the same time, Mlle. Madeleine Barot, who directed the thrilling work of CIMADE, was chosen as chairman of the Council's Youth Department.

Six representatives of the Eastern Church were in attendance at Geneva but the Provisional Committee instructed its officers to take specific steps to invite Orthodox Churches to become members. In a joint meeting with the I. M. C., plans were drafted for the admission of the "younger Churches" into the Council.

The Provisional Committee placed on record its sense of loss in the death of some of its strongest leaders, including Dr. William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, a leading theologian and one of the chief architects of the World Council. A striking witness to the place held by William Temple

was the decision to replace him, as chairman of the Provisional Committee, with a praesidium of *five* copresidents. Those chosen were: the Archbishop of Canterbury (successor to William Temple), the Archbishop of Uppsala (Primate of the Church of Sweden), Archbishop Germanos of Thyateira (Greek Orthodox), Pastor Marc Boegner, head of the French Protestant Federation, and Dr. John R. Mott.

A tribute to the enduring bonds of Christian fellowship was given in the nomination, by Dr. Boegner of France and Bishop Bell of Great Britain, of Bishop Theophilus Wurm of Germany to a place on the Committee, and of Pastor Martin Niemöller as his permanent Alternate.⁶

The Château de Bossey

One happy event at the Provisional Committee meeting was the announcement of a gift of \$500,000 by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to finance a project which had been proposed to him by Dr. Visser 't Hooft the year before. This was the establishment of an ecumenical training center which has since become one of the important aspects of the Council's varied program. It was designed to serve first the suffering Churches of Europe and then of the whole world. Its task and purpose were set out in a memorandum adopted by the Committee, as follows:

a) It is founded on a definitely Christian basis. The Christian convictions for which the World Council of Churches stands are to penetrate both the teaching and the common life of students and professors. It is to give its students solid knowledge of the foundations of the Christian faith and of the life of the Christian Church.

b) It is thoroughly ecumenical, so that among staff and students all Christian denominations which are members of the World Council are represented and feel at home spiritually.

⁶*Ibid.*

c) It is missionary-minded and therefore is concerned with all classes and types of people, and all tendencies of thought and life which are relevant factors in the spiritual and social situation. It stands for the evangelisation of those who have lost all touch with the Christian Church particularly the younger generation, and seeks to help its students to find Christian solutions to the problems which they have to face in the various professions.

d) It is a centre where the new insights and new life which have come to the Churches in recent years are transmitted from one Church to another. It especially stands for the re-awakening of the Church through the spiritual mobilization of the laity.

e) It stands for that international understanding between the different nationalities and races which is based on a sense of common membership in the family of God. This spirit is to find expression in the community life in which persons of all nations live together on a basis of mutual respect.⁷

The place chosen for what is now known as the Ecumenical Institute was the lovely Château de Bossey, on Lake Geneva and only about ten miles from the World Council's International headquarters. It dates back to the days of Madame de Stael but in later years had been used as a branch of an American college and could accommodate about 35 people and staff. The Château was leased for five years and later another lovely estate nearby—now called Petit Bossey—was purchased. Finally, in 1950 Mr. Rockefeller gave additional funds to purchase the Château and remodel it to better suit the needs of the Institute. To Bossey, ever since it opened in the Autumn of 1946, have come groups for *Training Courses* which last from three weeks to two and a half months, and specialized Study Conferences of from five to ten days.

The first director of the Institute, Dr. Hendrik Kraemer, was a layman and a distinguished leader in the Netherlands Reformed Church. It was quite an advantage, in a world in-

⁷*The Ten Formative Years*, p. 49.

stitute, to have a Director who could speak Dutch, English, French, German, Arabic, Malayan and Javanese. He was at one time Professor of the History of Religion in the University of Leyden. Suzanne de Diétrich, known far and wide for her Bible studies—especially among young people in the World Student Christian Federation—was also a member of the first faculty. The permanent faculty is supplemented by visiting lecturers from various parts of the world. Here, for example, physicians gather to consider how they can best witness to the Christian faith and the ecumenical Church in their profession. Similar sessions bring together lawyers, editors, principals of secondary schools, and so on.

The very first course given at the Ecumenical Institute will probably always hold the record for uniqueness, for among the members were a Czech who had spent almost six years in a German concentration camp; a young Dutch officer and his wife who had been prisoners of the Japanese in the same camp but without being able to communicate with each other; a Norwegian girl who had worked and traveled night after night for the Resistance Movement; a French girl who was at the point of death when rescued by the Swedish Red Cross; and Germans who had come from their bombed-out cities, but who had been so isolated that they were quite unaware of what others had gone through because of what German nationals under the Nazi regime had done.⁸

“Unconditional Unity—Unconditional Love”

In the summer of 1946 a peace conference was being held in Paris. It was characterized by mutual distrust, suspicion and fear, which meant that little could be accomplished. At the

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 52.

same time there was held in Cambridge, England, a conference of Church leaders—authorized by the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council—which, under the providence of God, has had and will have far greater meaning for the future peace of the world. It adopted a charter for a "Commission of the Churches on International Affairs" and the preamble of the charter contains this striking paragraph:

"The Church as God purposes it is a unique community of men without boundaries of nation or race, culture or tradition—unconditional unity grounded in the unconditional love of God. It is true that the churches have been sorely deficient in demonstrating this unity throughout the world. But in the last thirty years we have come to recognize where we have failed. The ecumenical movement is at least an approach to world unity among Christians which we may thankfully say that God has blessed, since its ties have held firm through all the dreadful political conflicts of these years. This brotherly unity which God has given and blessed will surely be further strengthened if we acknowledge our obligation to use it for the benefit of mankind."⁹

Some of the specific aims of the Commission are:

1. To encourage the formation—in each country and in each Church represented in the parent bodies—of commissions through which the consciences of Christians may be stirred and educated as to their responsibilities in the world of nations.

2. To gather and appraise materials on the relations of the Churches to public affairs. . . .

3. To study selected problems of international justice and world order, including economic and social questions, and to make the results of such study widely known among all the Churches.

4. To organize study conferences of leaders of different Churches and nations.

5. To represent the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council in relations with International bodies such as the United Nations and related agencies.¹⁰

⁹*Courier*, 6, No. 2.

¹⁰*The Ten Formative Years*, p. 58.

The Commission, which later became a permanent agency of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council, has remarkably competent leadership. Its first chairman was Baron F. M. van Asbeck, professor of International Law in the University of Leyden with a distinguished record of service for his country in Indonesia and with the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations. The director of the Commission, Kenneth Grubb of London, was controller of overseas publicity for the British Government during the war and later the president of the Church Missionary Society. The associate director, O. Frederick Nolde, professor in the Lutheran Seminary at Mt. Airy, Philadelphia, has become one of the best informed of all representatives working with UNESCO and some of the most important steps forward taken by the Assembly of the United Nations have been marked out by him. The Commission has brought to the attention of its constituent Churches such matters as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Genocide Convention, race relations in South Africa, Communism and the younger Churches, atomic energy controls, the Netherlands-Indonesian problem, and many others. At last the Churches have a world-wide agency which can furnish accurate information so that there may be formulated a "Christian mind on world issues" and that mind brought to bear effectively on the issues.

Buck Hill Falls—1947

It had been planned originally to hold the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches in the United States, in 1941. Not until April, 1947, however, were travel conditions normal enough to make it feasible for even the Provisional

Committee to meet in our country. So it was with great joy that the American members welcomed those from overseas to the sessions of the Provisional Committee which were held in the spacious Inn at Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania. Four new members were welcomed to the Committee—one each from Mexico, China, India, and Korea—and a new member from Japan was appointed.

By far the most important business of the meeting was the adoption of plans for the First Assembly. The invitation to meet in Amsterdam, Holland, from the Netherlands Reformed Church, the Bishops of the Old Catholic Church of the Netherlands, and the Ecumenical Council of the Netherlands was accepted with warm appreciation. The dates set were from Sunday, August 22, to Sunday, September 5, 1948. The report of the Committee on Arrangements was adopted with only slight modifications. The Chairman of the Committee, Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert of the Federal Council of Churches, stated that the Assembly would be new and truly unique even in Church history. What was being planned was not just another ecumenical conference, not merely an *ad hoc* meeting, but rather the inauguration of a continuing association of the Churches. The plans adopted will be evident when we come to the story of the Assembly itself.¹¹

Oslo—1947

The word *Oslo*, in ecumenical circles, has come to stand for the Second World Conference of Christian Youth. The first, as we have learned, was held in Amsterdam just before World War II began. Oslo came only two years after it ended, the

¹¹The World Council of Churches, 1947 Meeting of the Provisional Committee, *passim*.

first occasion for Christians of different nations to assemble in large numbers.

That within so short a time after global conflict Christian youth from seventy countries—victor and vanquished, rich and poor, subject and sovereign—could meet on a plane of brotherhood and Christian equality was almost a miracle. It was this fact of the fellowship itself which made the Conference worthwhile, even if there had been no compelling program. Indeed, there were impressive “fruits of the spirit” which came as a result of events not planned for. For example: On the very day the Conference began, news came of the fighting which had broken out in Indonesia. There were delegates from Indonesia as well as from the Netherlands—in fact they had traveled part of the way together. The eyes of the Conference were upon these two delegations. Would the Conference theme—*Jesus Christ Is Lord*—prove to be true in such a situation? It did. Yes, there were tense moments; misunderstandings had to be cleared away. But the two delegations met together, prayed together, and together issued a statement to the profound joy and satisfaction of everyone. That was not the only instance of the kind. There were significant meetings between the Czechoslovakians and Germans, the British and Indians, the French and the Czechoslovakians. The last meeting is an evidence of how deeply stirred the delegates were over awareness of “national sins”—for the French confessed the burden they carried because of the way in which their country had failed to stand by Czechoslovakia back at the time of “Munich” in 1938.

Perhaps second in impressiveness was the worship which was conducted after the pattern of many religious traditions: Norwegian and Swedish Lutheran, Swiss and Czech Reformed,

Anglican, Greek Orthodox, and "free" churches. Especially impressive was a service prepared by a Japanese young woman, member of the delegation which was prevented from attending at the last moment by the failure of the Far Eastern Commission to take action, despite many pleas. This service, read by a Japanese professor, resident in Switzerland (who used all three conference languages, English, French, and German), moved the delegates profoundly with its humility, penitence, and utter dependence upon spiritual verities now that all material supports have been torn away.

There were two services of Holy Communion to which the whole conference was invited. Both were held in the Cathedral. On Sunday morning was celebrated "High Mass" of the Norwegian Lutheran Church. On the following morning the Eastern Orthodox service—the ancient liturgy of St. John Chrysostom—was led by Metropolitan Pantaleimon of Edhessa, Greece. The Metropolitan preached in English and, because of the large number of English-speaking delegates, interspersed English sentences amid the Greek and old Slavonic of the liturgy. It was at the Norwegian service that the divisions of the Church loomed most dramatically and caused great heartsearching among the delegates. The Bishop of Oslo had invited all baptized members of their own communions to participate as communicants. For over two hours the stream of young people went forward to the altar. Over ninety per cent of the delegates had accepted the invitation. This made all the more prominent those who felt that for conscience's sake they could not communicate, especially since it included the preacher of the morning, the chairman of the worship committee, and the organizing secretary of the Conference itself.

An equal amount of time was allotted for Bible study and discussion groups. These were most fruitful, for it was in the smaller groups of about thirty members that the delegates got to know one another and could express themselves, as was not possible in the plenary sessions. Some had come with high hopes of quick solutions to their problems and were disappointed that these could not happen in so short a time. Others came with pet conclusions which were drastically upset when they began to see how people in other parts of the world looked at them. This was particularly true of the largest delegation there, that from the United States. There was astonishment, and even resentment, when it was discovered that in some parts of the world we are looked upon as a dangerous, selfish, empire-building power.

The plenary addresses were of a high order but it is not possible to summarize them here. No one could accuse the speakers of being "starry-eyed" idealists. The agonies of the world situation were starkly presented until many of the young delegates felt a mood of despair. It is significant that in this Conference the delegates from the United States felt themselves in spiritual kinship with those from Asia, and Africa, too—more so than with those from Europe. This was largely because of the theological pessimism in regard to this world which was reflected in a rather despairing attitude (at least so it seemed to young American delegates) toward social and political problems of the day on the part of the Europeans.

The hospitality of the Norwegian hosts was noteworthy. In spite of serious shortages in food as well as equipment and other necessities, they provided for the needs of 1,200 visitors with cheerful generosity. At almost any hour of the day citizens of Oslo were gathered on the sidewalks near meet-

ing places, waiting to catch a glimpse of delegates from far-away lands with their colorful costumes and many-hued complexions. Many a delegate testified that what the Norwegians did "moved me profoundly." It was *the* country in which to meet, with its record of resistance on the part of the Church to the forces of materialistic paganism. The kindly spirit of Bishop Berggrav of Oslo was a benediction from the start, especially to those who knew the story of his defiance of secular power and his bold leadership in the resistance movement.

It was not an easy conference. At times there were tensions, despair, and puzzlement. But the abundant testimony of delegates themselves speaks volumes as to the worth of it. Personal commitment, enlarged horizons, new devotion to the unity of Christ's Church, a sense of a world-wide fellowship—these are some of the treasures which were carried away, to be shared with others in every corner of the globe.¹²

Whitby—1947

Two other world conferences, both ecumenical, were held in the same manner as the one at Oslo. The one at Whitby, Canada, was the first enlarged meeting of the Committee of the International Missionary Council to meet since the great conference in India at the end of 1938. A hundred leaders of the missionary movement, from forty different countries, surveyed the postwar scene. They found that, except for Communist-controlled China where some churches and communities had been blotted out, the Church had not been destroyed by the scourge of war. Indeed, in some countries great progress had been made despite the most adverse conditions. It had

¹²*Report of the Second World Conference of Christian Youth, passim.*

even been of advantage to some of the younger Churches to have less missionary help for that had meant throwing larger responsibility upon the native leaders.

Great progress was also reported in the "partnership" relationship between the older and younger churches. More and more, as churches in former "mission fields" have become firmly rooted, missionaries give their primary allegiance to those churches rather than to the home churches from which they have come. This development does not, however, indicate that the day of the missionary is over, as some have suggested. Again and again, leaders of the younger Churches told of the needs of their countries for *more* missionaries. In 1926 there were 8,000 missionaries in China; in 1946, half as many. The representatives from China said there was need for not less than 20,000. (Alas, they could not foresee that within four years most of the 8,000 would be forced out.) The only stipulation regarding missionaries, who might be of all types and qualifications, was that they gladly work in close harmony with the Church in the country to which they were sent.¹³

Selly Oaks—1947

The first postwar council of the World's Sunday School Association met in August at Westhill, Selly Oaks, Birmingham, England. There council members and visitors from fifty-three countries listened to reports on religious education from all parts of the world. Dr. Forrest L. Knapp, one of the two general secretaries, reviewed the past achievements of the Association, which ranks among the oldest of ecumenical organizations, and laid down an ecumenical policy for the future which included geographical expansion, greater service

¹³*Renewal and Advance* (Report of Whitby Meeting of I.M.C., 1947).

to Orthodox Churches, and close co-operation with the World Council of Churches.

A new name for the Association was adopted—The World Council of Christian Education. A department of Visual Aids was established under the chairmanship of Great Britain's noted motion picture producer, J. Arthur Rank, and with provisions for secretaries in New York, London, and Geneva. It was agreed that the Council's youth work be developed in close collaboration with the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches so as to aid in providing a unified program for young people in the churches of the world.¹⁴

¹⁴*Courier*, 7, No. 2.

XI.

The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches —Amsterdam, 1948¹

The Call to the Churches

From the time that the decision was made (at the meeting of the Provisional Committee in 1946) to hold the First Assembly of the World Council in the summer of 1948 preparations went forward at an ever-increasing tempo. The attention, not only of the staff and official committees but eventually of a large part of Christendom, was focused on the *great day* when the long years of the "process of formation" would be ended and the Council be a reality.

The heaviest burden of preparation for the First Assembly—next to that borne by the staff in caring for a thousand and

¹This chapter is based upon the *Official Report of the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches*, ed. by W. A. Visser 't Hooft, *passim*, and upon personal experience.

one details—rested on the shoulders of the Study Department Commission under the chairmanship of the broad-shouldered president of Union Theological Seminary, New York, Henry P. Van Dusen. The Commission established smaller commissions, one for each of the four phases of the general theme. To these commissions were appointed leading Christians, both clerical and lay, from all parts of the world. At the first meeting of each commission, a volume was outlined and contributors carefully chosen. That the study process might be the result of real "ecumenical conversation" each contribution was subjected to the scrutiny not only of the particular commission but of a larger circle of experts from all parts of the world. Some papers were rewritten two and three times in the light of the criticisms. The final result—placed in the hands of each member of the Assembly—was four volumes (eventually published as one) that are of permanent value because, although prepared for a particular occasion, they deal with issues of continuing and urgent importance for the whole of Christendom.

In the call to the Churches concerning the First Assembly, sent out over the names of the five copresidents, gratitude was expressed for the fact that "after long years of separation, and soon after the most devastating war in human history, the Christian churches throughout the world will be able to express and to manifest their spiritual destiny." There was a reminder that a new consciousness of fellowship had been awakened and a flood of prayer (overflowing all ecclesiastical barriers and national antagonisms) released because of the trials and persecutions endured by many of the fellow member Churches. With that background, and "with the blessing of God, this Assembly can mark a new experience of the glory of

God and a new acceptance by Christians and Christian churches of their responsibility for seeking continually to bring the whole of human life and relations under the kingship of Christ."

In announcing the theme of the Assembly—MAN'S DISORDER AND GOD'S DESIGN—the Message of the Provisional Committee confessed that the churches had not only failed to prevent man's disorder but had been partakers in that disorder. "Our churches are divided, both in speech and in action, and by their divisions the whole work of the Church suffers most grievous harm. . . . We long for the day when the Lord Jesus Christ shall recapture the churches and, manifesting His glory, lead them to speak with one clear voice, and to act as those who serve Him only as their Lord.

"The World Council of Churches is itself both a declaration of the spiritual unity of its member churches and a means through which they may express that unity in action."

The Call ended with an invitation to all Christians to join in earnest prayer "that the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches may be used of God for a rebirth of the churches, and for their rededication in the unity of the faith to the common task of proclaiming His Word and doing His work among all nations."

At the Nieuwe Kerk in Praise and Prayer

The bells in thousands of American church steeples rang joyously the morning of Sunday, August 22, 1948. They had reason to ring, for they were announcing the first meeting of a momentous assembly, the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches. No other meeting of the Churches of the world for centuries was so important, for the Assembly had

convened in Amsterdam, first city of the Netherlands, for the purpose of establishing a continuing, world fellowship of the Churches, dedicated to co-operation and unity. Though still morning in the United States, it was afternoon in Amsterdam when the official delegates of 147 branches of the Christian Church—representative of every great communion save Rome—gathered in the historic Nieuwe Kerk (the "New Church," built in the 1400's). As was fitting, they gathered for praise and prayer—praise to God for having led them to that hour, prayer that his will might be done through them and so his kingdom come on earth in greater measure.

The Nieuwe Kerk was thronged with visitors from all parts of the globe. Eagerly they awaited the entrance of the delegates. The great organ announced the stately procession and for nearly twenty minutes archbishops, archimandrites, bishops, priests, pastors, deacons, elders, Doctors of Divinity, and plain laymen and laywomen made their way around the church to their appointed places. The worship began with the singing, to the familiar tune of "Old 100th,"² of the French hymn by de Beze (1519-1605)—"*Vous qui sur la terre habitez.*" Those who could, used the original tongue. Others sang in English, "All people that on earth do dwell" or in German, "*Nun jauchzt Herren all Welt.*" The fact that different languages were used did not spoil the harmony in the hymns, for music is a universal language.

A minister of the Dutch Reformed Church called the Assembly to worship and penitence. The Archbishop of Canterbury led in prayer. The Holy Scriptures were read in French and Swedish by the president of the French Protestant Federation and the primate of the Church of Sweden, respectively.

²The tune "Old 100th" was originally used with a paraphrase of Psalm 134 but gained its present title from long association with paraphrase of Psalm 100.

There could have been but one choice for the first speaker of the Assembly. In his person, John R. Mott incarnated the ecumenical movement, and he was an active participant in every one of the great conferences from Edinburgh, 1910, on. In his address he recalled the past and paid tribute to former comrades who had labored beside him in the task of furthering the unity of the Church. But he did not rest upon the past. From his vantage point of eighty-three years, he could look forward with hope and courage though he had to warn the Assembly that the most *exacting days* for the Church lay ahead.

So far, all the parts of the service had been taken by men from the West—Europe and America. Happily, the committee chose its second speaker from the Orient, a young Christian leader from Ceylon, D. T. Niles, later to be chosen chairman of the World Council's Youth Department. There was a prelude to his sermon, an Indian Thevaram sung by a young Telugu minister of the Church of South India who wore an Indian costume of white and blue. Then the young preacher, clad in white, came to the reading desk and preached a remarkable discourse on the text "Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh?" (Exodus 3:11) in which the thought centered about Moses at the burning bush and Christians at the cross of Christ.

The service ended with the benediction according to the Greek rite, pronounced by the saintly Metropolitan of Thyatira, Archbishop Germanos. Though spoken in the Greek tongue, even one who could not understand the words felt the bestowal of a blessing that somehow linked him with the Church Universal through the ages. No small debt is due to Archbishop Germanos, now a member of the church triumphant, for the measure of participation in the ecumenical movement on the part of the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

The Day of Fulfillment

The Main Hall of the Concertgebouw (Concert Hall), where the first World Conference of Christian Youth had met on the eve of World War II, was the scene of the general meetings and all plenary sessions. On the evening of the first day there were addresses on "How God Has Led Us." It was the following morning, however, that there came the day, and hour, yes the very moment, of *fulfillment* when the World Council of Churches became a reality. Up to that moment all had been *provisional*, in process of formation. Finally, at about 10:30 A.M. Netherlands time—August 23, 1948—one of the copresidents of the Provisional Committee, Pastor Marc Boegner, presented a simple resolution, as follows:

RESOLVED: That the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches be declared to be and is hereby constituted in accordance with the constitution drafted at Utrecht in 1938 and approved by the Churches; that the Assembly consist of those persons who have been appointed as the official delegates of the Churches adhering to the Council; and that the formation of the World Council of Churches be declared to be and hereby is completed.

Immediately there came an objection. It was a tense moment. Was this objection just the first of a series? Would the Assembly be bogged down at the very start? The objection was raised (in a motion to delete) by a delegate from the Church of England, and fortunately the Archbishop of Canterbury was in the chair. He so completely answered the objection that the motion to delete had no second. No one else wished to speak to the motion to adopt the resolution and the Archbishop called for the vote. When he announced the result in the historic words: "The Resolution is adopted *Nemine Con-*

tradicente," there was a burst of applause, but only for a moment and the proper response followed as the delegates, together with the throng of alternates, consultants, and visitors, stood in silent prayer. The chairman then offered prayer in these words:

Almighty God, here we offer unto Thee our thanksgiving and praise, that Thou hast brought us to this hour and this act in the faith of Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit. As Thou hast prospered those into whose labours we enter, so, we pray Thee, prosper us in this our undertaking by Thy most gracious favor, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in Thee we may set forth Thy glory for the well-being of Thy Holy Church and the salvation of all Thy people. Amen.

Thus, for the first time in Christian history, there was established an official, permanent, world-wide, organized yet free fellowship of the Churches, dedicated to unity and co-operation. What the delegates from six continents and the islands of the sea had come to Amsterdam to do, *was done*. In the doing there was no "pomp and circumstance" but, in retrospect, it grows in solemn significance. Those who were privileged to be witnesses of the event felt that it was one of those "authentic" experiences when one simply *knows*, beyond cavil or doubt, that *it is of God*. How else could men have so transcended the divisions of nation, color, class, faith, order, and tradition? As was said of that first council on unity, at Jerusalem, it can be reported that at Amsterdam "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit" and the Assembly to establish the World Council of Churches.

“We Intend to Stay Together”

This ringing declaration is a sentence from the Message, adopted at the final plenary session, but it might well be an over-all statement of the spirit in which the two weeks of meetings were held, whether they were services of worship, plenary sessions, or group discussions. Space forbids a detailed report of the meetings, even a summary of the many splendid addresses. That is ably presented in a volume, edited by the General Secretary, which contains more than 250 pages.

The Message, unanimously adopted, is addressed not to the world in general but to “all who are in Christ, and to all who are willing to hear.” It does not attempt to review the work of the Assembly but to make great declarations of faith and call the Churches to act upon them.

The Assembly was conscious that, despite the significance of what it was accomplishing, the task was scarcely begun and could not be carried forward without co-operation on the home front. The Message says,

Our coming together to form a World Council will be in vain unless Christians and Christian congregations everywhere commit themselves to the Lord of the Church in a new effort to seek together, where they live, to be His witnesses and servants among their neighbours. . . . We have to make of the Church in every place a voice for those who have no voice, and a home where every man will be at home. We have to learn afresh together what is the duty of the Christian man or woman in industry, in agriculture, in politics, in the professions and in the home.

Separate Tables for the Lord's Supper

The diversity of ways of worship that are represented in the Council was manifest at the daily services held each morning in the Koepelkerk. Each was conducted in accordance with

a different tradition: The Kyodan (Church of Christ) in Japan, the Methodist Church, the Lutheran Church in Hungary, Congregational Church of Australia, Reformed Church of France in Madagascar, the Religious Society of Friends, the Baptist Church in the United Kingdom, and the Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (Negro) in the United States.

Alas, at the heart of the Church's worship, the Lord's Table, there was once again division, to the anguish of delegates and observers. It was not possible to call *one* service of Holy Communion *the* service of the Assembly. Instead, there must needs be four separate services provided so that all might participate and the scruples of none be offended. By far the largest service was held on the second Sunday morning, in the Nieuwe Kerk where the opening service had been held. This service was conducted after the custom of the host Church and to it all baptized and communicant Christians of all denominations and communions were invited.

Those unfamiliar with the service in the Dutch Reformed Church found it deeply significant as the communicants, a hundred at a time, sat around a table spread across the front of the house of worship. Ten ministers, from different countries and different confessions, sat with the communicants at the table, recited the words of institution and delivered the bread, then the chalice, to those sitting on each side of them. They in turn passed the elements to their neighbors, and so on until all at the table had partaken. About 1,200 sat in turn at the table and others, who felt they could not partake of the elements, were present at the service and united in spirit with the rest.

The other services were conducted by the Anglican, Lutheran, and Eastern Orthodox Churches. To them the whole Assembly was invited, though not as communicants, except in

the Lutheran service to which the invitation was as broad as to that of the Dutch Reformed Church. Each service made its contribution and many of the delegates availed themselves of the opportunity of becoming acquainted with another tradition than his own.

It was a blessing that the *preparation* for all the services of Holy Communion was a united service. There the liturgy expressed the sorrow that was felt by those who so greatly desired unity and yet found no way in which to achieve it at the Lord's Table. A moving sermon by Dr. Kraemer, director of the Ecumenical Institute, called the people to repentance and indicated that the unity which was so greatly desired was foreshadowed in the fact that all had united to prepare to receive the Holy Communion, although by diverse forms.

Youth Out in Front

Youth was literally out in front, for their delegation—100 in number, present as observers—sat facing the delegates, in the choir seats which rise tier on tier to the level of the galleries. They attended the plenary sessions and the services of worship. When the delegates divided for the study sections, the youth held their own study sections, on the same themes and on the basis of the same preparatory material. They issued their own findings on the nature of the Church and its witness to the world, on the Church's responsibility in the social and international disorder. They did not hesitate to speak their minds. Some even criticized the preparatory material furnished by their elders. One remarked: "In the youth groups we came more to the point than the older ones. Somehow the older groups were trying to compromise most of the time." Lest that seem but the brashness of youth, let it be said that one of the most distinguished delegates from Europe thought the findings

of youth surpassed that of the elders. At all events, they took their assignment with seriousness and prepared themselves to become—if their Churches are wise—splendid material for future voting delegates.

The Who's Who—Also Who Was Not

The *Who's Who* of the Assembly—an excellent booklet of more than 100 pages—reveals some interesting statistics, for it gave not only the names of Delegates, Alternates, Accredited Visitors, Observers, Consultants, and Youth but also information as to Degrees, Date of Birth, Nationality, Ecclesiastical Position, Church, Present Work, Status at Assembly, and Permanent Address.

One hundred forty-seven Churches from 44 countries were represented at Amsterdam. There were 351 delegates and 238 alternates. Of these delegates 270 were of the clergy, 61 were laymen, and 20 were laywomen. Three hundred two of the delegates had disclosed their ages. This affords a fair average and shows that the Assembly was *younger* than many suppose. The average age for the whole Assembly was 55; 63% of the delegates who reported their ages were under 60, 20 were under 40 and one under thirty. Only 18 had attained to three-score-and-ten years. Strangely enough, the average age of the delegation from "young" America was five years older than the general average. However, one must not press the matter of ages too far. John R. Mott was the oldest delegate but at 83 he had the vigor and outlook of a man twenty years younger.

It had been hoped that there might be at least a few Roman Catholic visitors, in spite of the fact that the Vatican had made it clear on previous occasions that no official participation was possible. Many Roman Catholic priests and laymen

asked to be invited and provision was made for ten invitations to those who had shown themselves to have a real understanding of the aims of the ecumenical movement. A few weeks before the Assembly the Papacy took action which resulted in a refusal to grant permission to any Roman Catholic to attend. The only Roman Catholics present were some journalists representing the Press.³

Another great Church that was not represented at Amsterdam was the Russian Orthodox, the largest Eastern Orthodox body in the world. There were Russians of the Orthodox faith, men who were of the "dispersion" at the time of the Revolution but who were not entitled to represent their mother Church. The Russian Church had received an invitation to participate and in 1947 had agreed to have representatives at the World Council. The meeting was canceled by the Russians. The Russian Orthodox Church held a conference with other Orthodox Churches behind the Iron Curtain and refused the invitation to join at Amsterdam, giving a long list of objections. It will be best to quote from the report to the Assembly, made by the Provisional Committee, relative to this refusal, as follows:

The one hopeful element in the situation is that the reasons given for the negative decision are based upon a complete misunderstanding of the true nature of our movement—a misunderstanding such as can easily arise in a Church whose leaders have no firsthand knowledge of ecumenical life. If we succeed, here at Amsterdam and in the coming years, in making it clear that so far from pursuing political purposes we have no other concern than the concern for the Lordship of Christ everywhere—in East and West—and for His Church as the *one* Holy Church, it may yet be possible to remove the existing misunderstandings.⁴

³See *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 197-201.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 188-197.

The Reports of the Sections

Except for the actual formation of the Council, the most important work was done in the four sections into which the delegates divided. (The alternates met in separate sections but had the same themes for study.) There it was that, in the greater intimacy of groups of about 100, there could be real discussion and "ecumenical conversation" through which misunderstandings could be clarified. There it was that the delegates found, as Dr. Barth put it, "their disagreements were all within the area of their agreements." Each section reported its findings to the Assembly, where it was subjected to discussion and revision. Finally, each report was *received by the Assembly and commended to the Churches for their serious consideration and appropriate action*. The wording is very important because, again and again, press reports seemed to imply that the Assembly made this or that *pronouncement* on controversial matters. The Assembly did *not* make pronouncements. This is not to infer that the reports are not important because they were not *adopted* as statements of the Assembly itself. After all, they represent the distilled wisdom of a long process of study and discussion in which the best minds of Christendom participated. Every member of the constituent churches, who has not already done so, ought to read the reports which are available in a splendid brochure obtainable from any office of the World Council of Churches. Here we can but bring out a few salient points of each report.

The first section, which dealt with the Universal Church in God's Design, continued the Faith and Order discussions that began in Lausanne in 1927 and were renewed at Edinburgh and in various meetings of the Faith and Order Continuation Committee. The Report took the form of setting forth the

"given unity" and the "deepest difference." Thus there are statements of common beliefs, then the common problems that arise in connection with the common beliefs. *Division*, as contrasted with *diversity*, is held to be a sin and although "genuine convictions and loyalty to truth itself have their part in the making and perpetuating of divisions . . . pride, self-will and lovelessness have also played their part and *still do so*."

The report of Section II, on The Church's Witness to God's Design, begins with a declaration of the *purpose of God*, namely, "to reconcile all men to Himself and to one another in Jesus Christ His Son." In vivid terms the Report describes the present situation in which the Church must witness, a situation in which the "mood of many swings between despair, frustration and blind indifference"; and further, one that finds a "formidable obstacle" to the witness of the Church in "the conviction that it [the Christian faith] belongs to a historical phase now past." Yet it is a period of transition when the minds of millions, especially in Asia and Africa, are more than usually open to the gospel. So, the present day is the beginning of a new epoch of missionary enterprise.

Having described the situation, Section II then describes the Church's task—to worship and witness as a real *community* which accepts full Christian responsibility for mutual service and breaks down all barriers of race and class; to be "a people of God *in* the world" not apart from it; to have the *ecumenical sense* which means that each Christian group must be conscious of the world-wide fellowship of which it is a part. "We are persuaded," says the report, that although "God gives the gift of His grace to Churches even in their separation . . . He has yet additional gifts to give to a Church united in ac-

cordance with His will." The report ends on the note of urgency, for "now is the accepted time!"

The most publicized, and the most misunderstood, report of the section meetings is that of Section III on the Church and the Disorder of Society. This is because it deals with "hot spots" in social problems, on which there is a great divergence of opinion, and also because of the press reports that gave either erroneous interpretations or ones in which partial truths conveyed untruth to the readers. One must be mindful of the fact that there were some two hundred "news hungry" representatives of the Press of the world. So much of the work of the Assembly, in spite of its importance, had little *news value* that, when a report was adopted in which capitalism and communism were discussed in the same paragraph, there was "something to write home about." As a result, delegates returning to America found, to their amazement, an impression abroad that the Assembly had said that capitalism was as bad as communism. Of course, the Assembly made no pronouncements but, in addition, the *report* said nothing of the kind. Indeed, it did not compare capitalism and Communism but tested each by the standards of the Gospel—which is quite a different matter. Those who would equate the capitalistic system, and American "free enterprise," with the kingdom of God are bound to disapprove of the report. But those who remember that, while in the United States the great majority of church members are *beneficiaries* of the capitalist system, in Europe and Asia there are millions who are the *victims* of the worst features of the system—those who remember that will agree with the report's conclusion that "the Christian churches should reject the ideologies of both Communism and *laissez faire* capitalism, and should seek to draw men away

from the false assumption that these extremes are the only alternatives." Any candid reading of the report will disclose the fact that the analysis of the points of conflict between Christianity and Marxian Communism is a *devastating condemnation* of Communism. In the testing of capitalism by Christian principles there is an assertion that the developments of capitalism "vary from country to country and often the exploitation of the workers that was characteristic of early capitalism *has been corrected in considerable measure* by the influence of trade unions, social legislation and responsible management." What still prevents capitalism from being wholly Christian is (1) the tendency to subordinate the meeting of human needs to economic advantage; (2) the tendency to produce serious inequalities; (3) the development of a practical form of materialism by placing emphasis upon success in making money; and (4) the subjection of capitalist countries to "a kind of fate which has taken the form of such social catastrophes as mass unemployment."

In presenting the report of Section IV—on the Church and the International Disorder—Kenneth Grubb, Executive Chairman of the Church's Commission on International Affairs, admitted that it had not been possible to put together a statement on peace and war which had the support of the various points of view that were represented on the Section and so the report had to state a "trilemma"—that is, simply a statement of the varying points of view. For this reason, one's appreciation of the report will be colored by his own judgment on international tensions.

It did declare in unequivocal terms that "WAR IS CONTRARY TO THE WILL OF GOD" (the capitals are as printed in the official report); that "War as a method of

settling disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ"; and that "the part which war plays in our present international life is a sin against God and a degradation of man."

The report analyzes the causes of conflict between the powers and calls upon Christians to attack them; declares that "the nations of the world must uphold the rule of law" and the churches must help them by laying moral foundations without which any system of law will break down; asserts that "the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms should be encouraged by domestic and international action" and, finally, reminds the churches and all Christian people that they have obligations in the face of international disorder. Here attention is called to the fact that the World Council of Churches can be of tremendous importance in the life of the nations because it is an expression of a fellowship which transcends race and nation, class and culture, and is knit together in faith, service and understanding. "Its aim will be to hasten international reconciliation through the cooperation of all Christian churches and of all men of good will."

Section IV presented excellent resolutions concerning the uprooted peoples of Europe and Asia and a Declaration on Religious Liberty which were adopted by the Assembly—thus constituting an exception to the rule of no pronouncements.

Concerning Committees

The first three committees to report to the Assembly had to do with (1) Constitution and Rules and Regulations, (2) Policy, and (3) Programme and Administration. Each had to do with vital matters, but the detail is too great to be reported here. The result of actions on policy, programme and administration will be apparent when we look at the organization and

work of the World Council as it is today. The fourth committee, as has been noted, was divided into four parts and hence had four reports, each on a "Concern of the Churches."

The first "concern" to report was *The Life and Work of Women in the Church*. The report was short and did not indicate what lively discussion had preceded its drafting. Noting that in many countries and churches "the full cooperation of men and women in the service of Christ through the Church has not been achieved," the report mentioned four problems relating to the life and work of women in the Church: (1) the integration of voluntary service organizations, in which women are enrolled, into the total structure of the Church so that they will not become independent movements; (2) the inclusion of women in church "courts, committees, and boards, where policy is framed and decisions affecting Church life as a whole are made"; (3) the improvement of the status of women who are professional church workers so as to give those with a sense of vocation more standing; and (4) the ordination of women. Observers were quite captivated with the way in which Sarah Chakko of India steered the recommendations through to adoption despite several objections on the part of male delegates. Small wonder that she was asked to head the Commission and later was chosen as one of the presidents of the World Council, the first woman to be chosen to such an office.

The Significance of the Laity in the Church was the second "concern" to receive the attention of the Assembly. Because the laity constitutes more than 99% of the Church and are the ones who "spend the greater part of their lives in their homes, their occupations, and the public life of the community," they are the ones capable of showing "in and to the world that the message of the Bible and all that the Church

is committed to by obedience to its Lord are relevant to the real problems and needs of man in every age, and not least in our own." At the same time,

the fact is that in their occupations, whether they are doctors, lawyers, industrialists, farmers, steel workers, etc., they live in an increasingly secular world. How to live and work there as Christians, as members of the Church; how to give witness to their faith, how to think about the bearing of the Christian faith on the economic, social, political and cultural realities and backgrounds, is for most of them a mystery. . . . The Church is for them not their source of strength and light, but a place for the satisfaction of a religious need isolated from the everyday realities of a modern world moulded by the effects of industrialism, technics and standardization.

This properly lays a burden on the Church, a burden which rests heavily (although the report did not specify this) on the *clergy*, to train laymen and women for service and then use them. A resolution was presented, and adopted, asking the Central Committee to study the proposal for not less than three area meetings of laymen to study further the ways of enlisting the full lay power of the Church.

The report of the part of the committee that dealt with the *Christian Approach to the Jews* found its basis for the study not only because the Jews have suffered more bitterly from the disorder of man than any other people, but also because the Church's commission is to preach the gospel to *all* men, which includes the Jews and, moreover, the Church received a spiritual heritage from Israel which it is "in honor bound to render back in the light of the Cross." There are high barriers to be overcome because of anti-Semitism which "is sin against God and man." Where missions to the Jews have been undertaken, it has not been through the normal ministry of the Church, which has meant in many cases the converts

being forced into segregated spiritual fellowship rather than being welcomed into the regular Church membership. The committee believed that "it should be made clear to church members that the strongest argument in winning others for Christ is the radiance and contagion of victorious living and the outgoing of God's love expressed in personal human contacts." In a genuine Christian fellowship "there will be no difference between a converted Jew and other church members, all belonging to the same church and fellowship through Jesus Christ." Wisely, the report did not undertake to express a judgment on the political aspects of the Palestine problem, posed by the establishment of the state of "Israel" but did appeal to the nations "to deal with the problem not as one of expediency—political, strategic or economic—but as a moral and spiritual question that touches a nerve center of the world's religious life."

The fourth concern of the churches—for *Christian Reconstruction and Interchurch Aid*—could well have taken the attention of the whole Assembly for several days. We have already seen how this concern led the World Council, in its formative period, to develop a department which was larger than all others combined. It needed emphasizing at Amsterdam, however, just because relief and reconstruction had become a rather old story though the need remained desperate. So, the report began by emphasizing the fact that though much had been accomplished, even more remained to be done. There did need to be some shift of emphasis so that material reconstruction should not be allowed to obscure the developing need for spiritual regeneration and interchurch aid. There is a continuing need for "assistance in the maintenance of pastors, in the provision of theological training, and in the equipment of Christian institutions."

The Significance of the First Assembly

Amsterdam, 1948, was both an end and a beginning. It was the end of a period called "the process of formation" when everything which was done had to be considered *provisional*, when it was not correct to speak of the "World Council of Churches"—period. Those who had been restive under the attachment of the word "provisional" to vital and significant Christian enterprises praised God for that ending.

But Amsterdam, 1948, was just as truly a *beginning*, and that not simply the founding of a new corporate entity. It was the beginning even of a *process of formation*, for Council leaders recognize the fact that unless the process of formation goes on, *ad infinitum*, something quite disastrous will happen—the Council will be just another example of a great adventure that bogs down in the mire of organization, or a machine in which the wheels go round and round but never produce anything. In other words, the Council (to change the figure) must—like the Holy Universal Church of which it is but a foretaste—always be pressing forward toward that which is "hidden past the ranges" of man's sight. In the provisional period, the Council was in the care of the "ecumenical enthusiasts," as Dr. Van Dusen aptly put it. Now, at Amsterdam, it became a part of the official life of the constituent Churches, a responsibility of those whose primary concern is for their *denomination* because they are the ones responsible also for the success of denominational enterprises.

What hope is there that the process of formation *will* go on from strength to strength? I find assurance in the growing participation in the Council on the part of the Churches which we are pleased to call "younger" even though they exist amid ancient civilizations. Fortunately, they have not become adept—as have the Churches of America—at "tacking amendment

after amendment on Christian absolutes," as Dr. Hromodka observed. It was the bishop of a missionary Church, Bishop Azariah of Dornakal, India, who said at Edinburgh in 1910: "Unity may be theoretically a desirable ideal in Europe and America, but it is vital to the life of the Church in the mission field. The divisions of Christendom may be a source of weakness in Christian countries, but in non-Christian lands they are a sin and a scandal." At Amsterdam it was recognized that, with the terrifying advance of secularism, our so-called "Christian countries" *are really non-Christian lands*. Therefore, these representatives from the "younger Churches" will help us to see that our divisions *are a sin and a scandal*.

At Amsterdam the privilege and duty of Christians to witness to the faith that is theirs received rightful emphasis. Perhaps we can recover for *evangelism* something of its pristine glory, free from unfortunate connotations. Here again the churchmen from the mission field can teach us that we need just as careful preparation for witnessing in a secular, machine-dominated society as in reaching those whom we once called "the heathen."

Of course, the great fact and the most significant about Amsterdam, 1948, is that a world organization of *Churches*, representative of all the great communions except the Roman and Russian Orthodox with a constituency of more than 100,000,000 members, was actually established and launched on the quest for unity, the attainment of a living community of Christians the wide world over, a community which may yet accomplish what the early Church set out to do—*hold the world together*.

XII.

Between Amsterdam (1948) and Evanston (1954)

Bangkok—1949

Representatives of the churches in ten countries of East Asia assembled in Bangkok, Thailand, in December, 1949. They met under the joint auspices of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. Strange to say, the churches of East Asia had previously had little contact with each other. In spite of common problems and points of view that set them off from the West, there is such diversity among them that an Indian Christian sometimes feels himself more at home with one from Great Britain than from Indonesia, and a Japanese more at home with an American than a Chinese, so the meeting at Bangkok was a first step toward bringing the churches of East Asia into a living unity. This

first step was to lead to the formation, eight years later, in Prapat, Sumatra, of the East Asia Christian Conference, which marked a new phase in the extension of Christian unity.

As might be expected, the emphasis of the conference was on evangelism and the need for an indigenous leadership. It was agreed that the Christian message could be made more effective if "it is presented in close relation to the special needs of the human situation in any given time, and also if it adopts and utilizes certain values in the traditional culture of each people."

In considering Communism, which they meet firsthand, the Asian Christians believe that a Christian ought to distinguish between "the social revolution which seeks justice and the totalitarian ideology which *interprets and perverts it*."¹

Following the example set at Amsterdam, there was a youth delegation and it issued its own findings. These took account of the perennial struggle between youth and age, and recognized that the rapidity of social change makes the resulting tensions more acute. The young people emphasized their desire to be included in the tasks and activities of the Church as a whole but, at the same time, asked for freedom to organize so as to take account of their peculiar needs.

The Church, the Churches, and the World Council of Churches

By the summer of 1950, when the Central Committee met in Toronto, Canada, it had become clear that there was need of a clearer explanation than that given in the Constitution of just what the World Council of Churches is and what it is not. So the Committee considered a document entitled, "The

¹*The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. II, No. 3, pp. 274-286.

Ecclesiological Significance of the World Council of Churches." This fifteen-letter word sent the reporter for a large city paper to his dictionary posthaste. What he found was this: "Ecclesiology: The science of study of ecclesiastical art and antiquities, especially with reference to the adornment of churches."² This illustrates the difficulty which an average person has in understanding theologians who have a language of their own, all of which has not found its way into the ordinary dictionary. The theologians use *ecclesiology* to mean the doctrine of the Church—the institution, not the building. Due to the query of the plain man, the title of the report—which, after amending, was adopted and commended to the churches for study—now reads: "The Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches" but the old title appears as a subtitle.³ It is worth careful consideration in its entirety. The "highlights" are these:

At Amsterdam the Assembly had made it clear that the Council does not desire to usurp any of the functions which belong to the constituent churches, or to control them, or to legislate for them; that it has no thought of becoming a single unified church structure or one dominated by a centralized administrative authority. Since that time further questions have been raised since the Council "represents a new and unprecedented approach to the problem of inter-church relationships." To answer in terms of precise definitions is difficult when, as we have seen, the Churches themselves have hesitated to give precise definitions of the Church. So, the statement sets forth first the things which the World Council of Churches is NOT. 1) It is not and must never become a Super-Church.

²Lest it be thought that the dictionary consulted was a deficient one, let it be added that a multivolume English dictionary gives an almost identical definition.

³From booklet issued by the World Council.

It is not the World-Church. By constitution it cannot legislate or act for its member Churches. 2) The purpose of the Council is not to negotiate unions between Churches. That can only be done by the Churches themselves, acting on their own initiative. In this matter, the Council's only part is to bring the Churches into living contact with each other and promote a study of the issues of Church unity. 3) The World Council is not based upon any one particular conception of the Church and no Church has to change its conception in order to be a member. 4) At the same time, membership does not imply that a particular conception is merely *relative*, nor does 5) membership in the Council imply the acceptance of a specific doctrine concerning the nature of unity in the Church.

Turning now to positive assumptions which underlie the World Council there are eight put forward, none of them being in conflict with the teachings of the member Churches. 1) The member Churches believe that all its activity must be based on a common recognition that Christ is the Divine Head of the Church. 2) They believe, also, that, on the basis of the New Testament, the Church of Christ is one. 3) The member Churches recognize that the membership of *the* Church of Christ, i.e., the Church Universal, is more inclusive than the membership of their own Church body. So, they seek to come into living contact with those outside their own ranks who confess the Lordship of Christ. 4) Although member Churches consider that the relationship of each other to the Church Universal is a subject for mutual consideration, they do not believe that membership in the Council implies that each must regard the others as Churches *in the true and full sense of the word*. In other words, there is room in the Council for those Churches which recognize all other members as Churches

just as much as they are, and yet room for those who cannot conscientiously say that. But, 5) all member Churches at least recognize in other Churches *elements* of the true Church and that obliges them to confer with one another in the hope that the sharing of the elements of truth may lead to a unity based upon the full truth. 6) Member Churches seek to learn together from Christ what witness He would have them bear to the world. 7) Another implication of membership in the World Council of Churches is a solidarity which means rendering assistance to each other in time of need, and refraining from actions which are not brotherly. Finally, 8) member Churches enter into spiritual relations both to learn from each other and to give help to each other *in order that* the whole Church may be built up and its life renewed. "We praise God for His foretaste [experienced at ecumenical meetings] of the unity of His People and continue hopefully with the work to which He has called us together. For the Council exists to serve the Churches as they prepare to meet their Lord Who knows only one flock."⁴

"Jesus Christ—Teacher and Lord"

The meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council was not the only ecumenical gathering which met in Toronto, Canada, in the summer of 1950. The one which had the biggest "spotlight" upon it was the *Thirteenth World Convention on Christian Education*, held under the auspices of the World Council of Christian Education, from August 10-16. Fourteen years had elapsed since the previous convention, held in Oslo, Norway. One had been planned for South Africa but the onset of World War II prevented. As the

⁴From *The Church, The Churches, and The World Council of Churches*.

official Call had emphasized, "the years since 1936 have been long and bitter and filled with anxiety and pain, fruits of ignorance and sin. . . . Aware of the evil of our times, yet sustained by faith in *Jesus Christ our Teacher and Lord*, we hear afresh His summons: Go—make disciples of all nations."

Over 5,000 registered as delegates for this great convention and 4,700 of them attended. At the plenary evening sessions, held in the Coliseum of the Canadian National Exhibition Park, the average attendance was 6,000. As one would expect, the two biggest delegations were from the United States and Canada but there were splendid groups from Europe, Asia, Africa and the South Pacific—52 countries in all.

"Worship and fellowship were both stimulus and reassurance, and in both there was obliteration of the barriers which usually separate the peoples of the world. . . . Delegates were led to think in terms of complete obedience to Christ and in planetary terms." The evening plenary sessions were the most spectacular and presented some of the great leaders in the field of Christian education throughout the world. But it was in the smaller divisional meetings that the delegates received practical help in their task of ministering to boys and girls, and adults, too, in vastly differing situations.

We saw (IX, 10) the change of name from "World's Sunday School Association" to "World Council of Christian Education." In some sections of the constituency there was disapproval of this action taken in 1947, so at Toronto it was decided that the name should be: World Council of Christian Education and Sunday School Association.

Willingen—1952

Three world organizations of Christians met in 1952. The first of these was a meeting of the International Missionary

Council which was held in July in the little German village of Willingen. Like its meeting at Whitby, Canada, five years earlier, this was an enlarged committee of the I.M.C. but it followed two years of intensive preparation and study. (This was the first *international*, representative church or missionary gathering to be held in Germany in more than a century.) China and Korea were two areas in which the afflictions of the churches were most frequently recalled by the delegates. The third was Colombia, South America, whence responsible and documented reports were brought as to the violence to life and property to which Evangelical Christians were already known to be subjected, at the instance of *local* Roman Catholic leadership. Once again the delegates affirmed their belief that "the calling of the Church to mission and unity issues from the nature of God Himself . . . the calling of the Church is to be one family in Him and to make known to the whole world, in word and in deed, His Gospel of the Kingdom."⁵

Lund—1952

The theological problems considered by the first two world conferences on Faith and Order (Lausanne, 1927 and Edinburgh, 1928) were by no means solved. At the Amsterdam Assembly, only a fourth of the delegates could discuss them and their time was limited. Therefore another world conference was needed and in 1950 the Central Committee authorized the World Council's Commission on Faith and Order to invite the Churches of the world to send their representatives to the *Third World Conference on Faith and Order*.

Accordingly, at the invitation of the Church of Sweden, the Conference was held in the ancient University of Lund, during the last two weeks of August, 1952. Careful preparation had

⁵From *International Review of Missions*, No. 116, October, 1952.

been made and three volumes of essays issued—one on the Nature of the Church, one on Ways of Worship, and a third on Intercommunion. Even before the publication of these volumes, several booklets were issued to the delegates. The general purpose of the Conference was stated quite simply in an address by Canon Leonard Hodgson of the University of Oxford, who had guided the studies of Faith and Order since 1933: "We are sent by our churches in the hope that by conferring together during these two weeks, by deepening our understanding of what others really believe, we may discover that some of our differences which have kept us apart need do so no longer."⁶

It was not, as some might suppose, a conference of old men. The average age of the delegates was even younger than that at Amsterdam, just over 51. For many this was their first attendance at a great ecumenical gathering which meant that some ground already covered had to be "ploughed over" again for their benefits. Others were veterans of one or more previous meetings. They found that Lund had made advances over the first two Faith and Order conferences in these three ways: a. The turning toward what some called the *depth* method. In previous discussions attention had concentrated on pointing up the agreements and disagreements which tend toward or away from unity. There was a general feeling that this method had been exhausted. Now there was a turning toward a deeper study of the very roots of Christian experience—a centering upon Christ as the Head of the Church and what it means to be *in Christ*. b. The lifting up of the place of *worship* as a means toward unity. One section of the Conference concentrated on this study and found large areas in which unity could be attained through a deeper understanding of the

⁶From *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 1.

various forms of worship. c. The recognition of the large part that is played by *social* and *cultural* factors (sometimes referred to as the nontheological factors) which have been the primary cause of divisions even in cases where later generations have thought that they had only theological origins.

The Lund Conference adopted a constitution for the Faith and Order Commission, one which completed the process of bringing the movement fully into the life of the World Council of Churches as a whole.⁷ By this constitution, the Commission is charged to proclaim the essential oneness of the Church of Christ and keep prominently before the Churches their obligation to manifest that oneness and its urgency in the work of evangelism; to study questions of faith, order *and worship* with the relevant social, cultural, and other factors as they bear on the unity of the Church; and to study all matters in the present relationships of the Churches to one another, which cause difficulties and need clarification. The Conference also determined the wording for the theme of its studies at the Second Assembly of the World Council, "Our Oneness in Christ and our Disunity as Churches."

Kottayam, Travancore—Cochin, India—1952

Another "Third World Conference" met in 1952, that of Christian Youth. The sponsoring agencies were the same as for the first and second. Though not as big in numbers, this gathering of 300 young people from 55 nations, meeting in the southernmost state of India from December 11 to 25, was of the utmost significance because it was the first one outside Europe. Christians throughout all India had given money and made careful preparations for their guests. A huge meeting

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 100.

hall, of bamboo frame, was erected by the workers of Kottayam. Great crowds of spectators gathered to look on—6,000 on the opening day and 50,000 for a public celebration of St. Thomas' day.

For most of the delegates it was a strange experience to celebrate Christmas on a day when the thermometer reached 90 degrees. And Indian food was a novelty, too. But Christian hospitality is the same the world over and that of South India could not be surpassed anywhere.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this Conference was the fact that the Asian Christians had full opportunity to express their viewpoint and make it better understood by Westerners, so it is not surprising to find the young people declaring:

We live in a world of revolution. We see the rise of long submerged groups of people who ask not only for better material conditions of life but also for freedom to participate and help determine the total life of society. For us as Christians and as the church there is no alternative. It is our duty and high calling to witness for justice and freedom in political and economic life and to be concerned about social justice. We dare not be passive, for our inactivity is indeed action. We dare not say we do not know enough to act; we must seek to understand the world struggle. Wherever our suffering Christ is at work in community and national life, there we must be with Him.⁸

"Jesus Christ the Answer" was the conference theme and used the biblical text, 2 Corinthians 5:19: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." The daily discussions centered about the claims of Christ in all relationships of life, from the person to the world community. The conference did not confine itself to studies, discussions, and speeches. It

⁸From "Christian Youth Meet in India," in *The Christian Century*, January 21, 1953. Copyright 1953 Christian Century Foundation. Reprinted by permission from *The Christian Century*.

divided into teams of two to four and visited 90 parishes, belonging to five church bodies, in the surrounding territory, and talked earnestly about common Christian interests.

XIII.

The Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Evanston, 1954

The Setting

More than 600 representatives of the press, radio, and television converged upon Evanston, Illinois, in the middle of August, 1954. They came to cover the greatest religious event in the history of the United States—the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches. No other religious event had ever attracted such attention or been so thoroughly reported.

Ordinarily, according to the Constitution of the World Council, its Assembly shall be held every five years. Were there not a good reason for delay, this would have put the Assembly in 1953. But there was an excellent reason for delay, namely, that the Central Committee might have a meeting in *Asia*. That meeting was held in the first days of 1953 at

Isabella Thoburn College in Lucknow, India, where Sarah Chakko, the first woman to be chosen one of the presidents of the Council, was principal. Among important matters considered by the Committee were these: from the Asian side, a presentation of its social revolution and the implications for the Churches of the world; a report on the tense situation in South Africa; the desperate need for unity in the missionary task; the continuing and pressing refugee problem; and the crisis in Korea. Most important of all was the adoption of plans for the Second Assembly.

Americans had been thrilled when the decision was made—long before the Lucknow meeting—to hold the Assembly in the United States, at Evanston, Illinois, on the campus of Northwestern University. That this site was chosen, out of several invitations from other Universities, was due largely to the efforts of a consecrated Christian layman, Dr. James A. James, Dean Emeritus of Northwestern's Graduate School. He had been a lay delegate to the First World Conference on Faith and Order in 1927, and again at the Oxford and Edinburgh Conference in 1937. Tall, spare, and "straight as a ramrod," he was walking his usual five miles a day when the Assembly met in his *ninetieth* year. He had begun early, soon after the First Assembly, to get the University, the city fathers, and the Council of Churches to issue an invitation. When the report came that it would cost \$25,000 more to hold the Assembly in Evanston than on the East Coast, the University, sharing Dean James's enthusiasm, agreed to donate the \$25,000, besides furnishing the use of its magnificent facilities. Then, with Evanston leading the way and adjoining communities co-operating, a Committee of One Hundred was created whose major task was in public relations—preparing the North

Shore communities to be good hosts. One of its tasks, which profited the World Council's treasury, was the selling of some 35,000 tickets to the "bleachers" at the plenary sessions.

Another committee, set up by the Church Federation of Greater Chicago and with co-operation from the Midwest region, concentrated on a great "Festival of Faith" held the evening of the first day at Soldier Field where 125,000 people were enthralled by a dramatic presentation of the biblical story of creation, redemption in Christ, and the final hope of the world.

The Theme

The choice of a theme for the Assembly "Christ the Hope of the World," had not been too difficult. The treatment of the theme presented problems. An Advisory Commission on the Theme of the Second Assembly labored diligently in the summers of 1951, '52, and '53. Though composed of twenty-five of the leading theologians of the world, their reports aroused opposition in many circles. This was due largely to the greatly differing points of view which mark the so-called "continental" theology from that in the United States. There is not space here to elaborate on the discussions which preceded and pervaded the Assembly, only to point out that the prevailing thought in Europe—shared by many in America—centered about a hope that is "beyond history" and uses terms which sound very much like those of sects which look for a "second coming" to solve all the problems of society; while in our country there is an emphasis on the hope of achieving a greater approximation to the "kingdom of God on earth" through the power of the indwelling Christ as manifested by the Holy Spirit. That the representatives of 160 branches of the Christian Church, from all the great communions except the

Roman Catholic, could come to enough agreement to make a united statement to the world and adopt for transmission to member churches reports on the main theme and six subtopics is a witness to the way in which Christians who worship and work together find more that unites them than divides them. The Official Report contains a graphic, day-by-day narrative of this historic meeting as well as summaries of the discussions and the official documents that were issued.

"Unto One of the Least" (Matthew 25:40)

There was one report at Evanston which could be adopted with little debate—that of the Committee on "Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees." By then it had become apparent that inter-Church aid was a *permanent* obligation of the World Council, "based on the teaching of Scripture, the practice of the apostolic church," and the recognition that "the body is one, and hath many members . . . and if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it" (1 Corinthians 12:12, 26). The High Commissioner for Refugees had written:

"It seems to be one of the greatest achievements of the Christian churches in recent times that they have started increasingly to translate their faith and their hope into terms of practical programmes and projects in fields in which they bear responsibility. I do not think that I have any right to compare, but I would be surprised if there were any field in which the Christians have achieved so much as they have in the field of the refugee problem . . . which is still with us and unfortunately will remain with us for many years to come."¹

Hot Spots

The Section of the Assembly that dealt with "Intergroup Relations: The Churches Amid Racial and Ethnic Tensions" had to come to grips with some of the most vexing social

¹From *The Evanston Report*.

problems of the day. The forthright way in which it dealt with the problems are indicated in a few sentences of its report:

Racial and Ethnic fears, hates and prejudices are more than social problems with whose existence we must reckon; they are sins against God and His commandments that the gospel alone can cure. . . .

The churches have this two-fold duty, to obey and to proclaim the word of judgment, to repent and to call to repentance. It is their task to challenge the conscience of society; if there is no tension between the church and society, then either the society is regenerate or the church conformed. . . .

The Church of Christ cannot approve of any law which discriminates on grounds of race. . . . While it can find in the Bible no clear justification or condemnation of intermarriage, but only a discussion of the duties of the faithful in marriage with partners of other religions, *it cannot approve any law against racial or ethnic intermarriage*, for Christian marriage involves primarily a union of two individuals before God which goes beyond the jurisdiction of the state or of culture.²

The Assembly adopted resolutions, sponsored by this section, which declared that "any form of segregation based on race, colour or ethnic origin is contrary to the gospel." It reaffirmed that "anti-semitic prejudice is incompatible with Christian faith."

International relations have been a "hot spot" ever since World War I. The First Assembly took place in the atomic age but the Second Assembly met under the shadow of the hydrogen bomb. A great French Christian has contended that a new dimension entered world affairs when it became possible to destroy all of God's creation on earth. The Section on International Affairs found a world "so broken up and divided that international agreement seems remote at the present. Every-

²Ibid. *Italics mine.*

where fear and mistrust prevail." The Section agreed that two conditions of crucial importance must be met if catastrophe is to be avoided:

1. The prohibition of all weapons of mass destruction; including atomic and hydrogen bombs, with provision for international inspection and control such as would safeguard the security of all nations, together with the drastic reduction of all other armaments.

2. The certain assurance that no country will engage in or support aggressive or subversive acts in other countries.³

One might question the describing of "Faith and Order" as a hot spot, but any careful look at the variety of creedal beliefs and ways of ordering church life in 140 different denominations, representative of all the great communions except that of Rome, would reveal many tensions, as the deepest things that are believed and practiced, are held up to the light of differences which have persisted for generations. The title of this section's work indicates the problem: "Our Oneness in Christ and our Disunity as Churches." It was agreed that "there is *diversity* which is not sinful but good because it reflects both the diversities of gifts of the Spirit in the one body and diversities of creation by the one Creator. But when diversity disrupts the manifest unity of the body, then it changes its quality and becomes sinful division."⁴ The hopeful part of the report comes in these words:

All of us as members of churches believe we have been entrusted by God with certain elements of the One Church of Christ which we cannot forfeit. But at least we in the World Council of Churches are committed to a fellowship in which we are ready to bring our convictions under scrutiny in the presence of our fellow Christians and in the presence of the living Christ.⁵

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

Less Tense but Still Important

No one would question the importance of "Evangelism: the Mission of the Church to Those Outside Her Life" and one section dealt with that. The Church was again called to "Mission and Unity." Great emphasis was laid upon "The Laity: The Christian in his Vocation."

Vitally important steps were taken as a result of a report from the Central Committee on "The Structure and Functioning of the Council" for they determined to large degree the present setup in administration. An immense burden had rested upon the shoulders of the General Secretary, Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, as the work of the various departments had been coordinated in his person. This would not have presented a great problem had Dr. Visser 't Hooft been able to stay at headquarters. He is universally acclaimed as a Christian statesman of the highest order and he had guided the work of the Council from its inception as a provisional organization in 1938. But it is imperative that the General Secretary be free to visit among the Churches. Hence the creation of three main divisions: The Division of Studies; The Division of Ecumenical Action; and The Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees. Each division operates under an Associate General Secretary. As this is being written, it is a cause for rejoicing that new headquarters will soon be available to replace the old chalet and temporary barracks which have had to suffice for so long.

XIV.

The Five Years After Evanston, 1954

The Central Committee

The Central Committee is decidedly central to the ongoing work of the World Council. Meeting every year, in different parts of the world, these ninety members of the Assembly—chosen for their leadership and with regard to denominational as well as geographical position—spend at least a week together. Every meeting is filled with Council business and also with facing problems which have developed throughout the Christian world. It would need a whole book to describe their deliberations adequately. One of the simplest ways to be informed, as the years go by, is to make a gift to the World Council of Churches and receive its *Ecumenical Courier*.¹

¹475 Riverside Drive, New York 27, New York.

What the World Council of Churches Is Doing

When it comes to *action*, the Department of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees was the first to get under way and still remains by far the largest, and the most strategic. It has won friends where armaments and diplomacy have failed dismally. The helping hand to refugees has involved the resettlement of 100,000 refugees in new countries. In 1958 the Council could report² "a temporary field staff of 500 busy with a case load of over 150,000 refugees. Services include transferring, clothing, feeding, giving medical care, pastoral care, obtaining visas and countless other efforts for all these people who are paying the penalty for our twentieth-century wars." In 1959-60 the Department played a leading role in "World Refugee Year" but there still remained gigantic problems with stranded, homeless, and dispossessed families. Emergency relief is a service constantly facing the Council. Gathering as much data as possible, the Council notifies member churches of the catastrophe and requests their aid.

Ecumenical work camps bring together young people each summer from different national, racial, and church backgrounds in order to carry out Christian service and to enable them to realize the rich variety within the Christian fellowship. By 1958 more than 7,000 young people of 57 nationalities had participated in 260 work camps.

Ecumenical scholarships (120 each year) provide opportunities for theological students to study in foreign countries.

Health service concerns have established a rest center in Switzerland for convalescing pastors and church workers, and supply medicines much needed by church people behind the iron curtain.

²Quotes and material in this section are taken from bulletins issued by the World Council of Churches.

Obtaining and distributing contributed goods sends more than 150,000 tons of food, clothing and other commodities into over 50 countries.

The Division of Studies is responsible for "Faith and Order" research, Evangelism, Missionary Studies (with the International Missionary Council) and the relations of Church with Society. It has a particularly strategic role to play in relation to "areas of rapid social change" which are of such vital importance to understanding the cross currents of world affairs.

The resources of press, radio, film and television are explored and used through the World Council's Information Department. The quarterly *Ecumenical Review* and the *Ecumenical Press Service*, issued weekly in three languages, give in panorama and detail the broad picture of progress in the work of churches and Christian movements all over the world.

These are but a sampling of the many-faceted work of the World Council which, as this is written, is in its tenth year since its formation at Amsterdam in 1948.

Oberlin—1957

Although not world-wide in scope, the North American Conference on Faith and Order which met in Oberlin, Ohio, from September 3-10, 1957, was of great significance to World Council members in the United States and Canada. "What Is the Nature of the Unity We Seek" was the theme which was discussed by twenty-nine Protestant Churches of the United States, five in Canada, and five Eastern Orthodox Churches. The Oberlin Conference grew out of the Lund Conference (1952) but the preparatory work done for it marked a great step in bringing the problems of "Faith and Order" to local congregations. Hundreds of church groups had given careful

study to "Ecumenical Conversations"—a study booklet which posed the various questions upon which theologians had studied for years—and reported their ideas to the Conference. Twelve sections wrestled in the light of the preliminary studies with such questions as: "Why Do We Want Unity?"—"How Do Our Beliefs Divide and Unite Us?"—"Authority and Freedom"—"Mobility and Unity"—"Divisions in the Church along Lines of Race and Class"—"Does Baptism Divide or Unite the Church?" The results of their "wrestling" are contained in the "Oberlin Report" which will reach a still wider number of Churches than the original studies.

Ghana—1958

The International Missionary Council, meeting in the new African republic early in 1958, had on its agenda a most important question, namely, Shall the Council become fully integrated with the World Council of Churches? It will be remembered that the whole modern movement toward unity among the Churches stemmed from the great Missionary conference held in Edinburgh in 1910. From the inception of the World Council of Churches there had been not only close co-operation but "association" which found expression in many united activities, such as the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs and the East Asia Secretariat. The question as to why there need be two organizations kept rising as churchmen discussed the call of the Church to *Mission and Unity*. The fact that the I.M.C. is a council of *councils*, i.e. national groups of missionary societies, and the W.C.C. is a council of *Churches* did not seem to many to be a sufficient warrant for remaining separate bodies. The Ghana Assembly, by a large majority, adopted a statement in which it affirmed its acceptance in principle of the "integration of

the two Councils" and expressed the desire to take further steps toward that goal. It was suggested that the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches be postponed from 1960, the date first chosen, to 1961 so as to enable decisive action to be taken by the constituent bodies of both Councils. That suggestion was accepted by the Central Committee of the W.C.C. and so the Third Assembly will be held in New Delhi, India, in 1961.

"Making Ecumenicity Local"

Whoever coined the phrase "making ecumenicity local" made a real contribution to Church unity because it puts in terse form the basic task of Christians. Even a slight acquaintance with the ecumenical movement reveals the fact that many of the same people who show great enthusiasm for unity on the world scale are very slow to accept any changes in their denominational practices which would make for greater unity in a given situation. Unity in the *abstract* is one thing; unity on the *concrete* local scene is another. There is a saying that "a body without a spirit is a corpse but a spirit without a body is a ghost." For the average church member, alas, the Church Universal is but a ghost of an idea. To the extent that this is so, the ecumenical movement "walks with leaden feet."

There are many steps forward which can be taken in a local parish. Material is available for laying a foundation for ecumenical thinking in the church school. Emphasis can be placed on the Church Universal at the time of receiving young people into membership by baptism and confession of faith, or by confirmation, or by whatever may be the practice of a particular communion. A special service which can be adapted to local needs will be found in the Appendix (page 163). The

American Office of the World Council of Churches can furnish literature, filmstrips, and motion pictures. A postcard will bring information as to what is available. (See page 185 for address.)

One of the methods of making ecumenicity a reality to congregations which has proved to be most helpful is the holding of community services of ecumenical worship. Because of its importance, the first chapter of the Appendix is devoted to a discussion of *ecumenical worship*.

In Conclusion

All of the pressing problems of life, from those of the individual to those of the world community, must be solved in accordance with the divine will, for there is no other permanent solution. "If it be of God," then it is not difficult to see where the major responsibility of church members lies. They are to pray and labor for making the Church just what God intended it to be, "a unique community of men without boundaries of nation, race, culture, or tradition—unconditional unity grounded in the unconditional love of God."

Herein lies the importance of all phases of the ecumenical movement, especially the World Council of Churches which is the latest but not necessarily the last expression of the will to unity. Even in its process of formation the Council was able to hold Christians together across the barriers of war. It is not yet at the point where it can hold the world together but that is its goal.

There is a familiar slogan, "One world or no world." May it not be equally true to put it differently—"One Church or no world"—not one Church in the sense of a rigid and unyielding uniformity but a unity in which there are "varieties of

gifts, but the same Spirit; . . . varieties of service, but the same Lord; . . . varieties of working, but . . . the same God who inspires them all in every one." (1 Corinthians 12:4-6.)

Appendixes

Appendix I

The Approach to Unity Through Worship

The Holy Hill of Worship

It was the psalmist who described the approach to God as being like the ascent of a *holy hill* (Psalm 43:3), so the modern writer who describes worship in terms of climbing a mountain peak is carrying an ancient figure of speech a step further. Men start from different sides but as they approach the summit they draw nearer and nearer together. Finally, at the top they find one another. If being brought to the holy hill of the Lord means drawing closer and closer together, then the experience of real worship ought to be a unifying experience. Actually, to most laymen, and to many clergymen, worship seems to be divisive, as forms of worship differ.¹

¹See "Four Centralities of Worship," by E. A. Goldsworthy, in *Christendom*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Winter, 1940.

In spite of the prevailing impression as to the fact that ways of worship divide us, there is almost universal testimony that at the great ecumenical gatherings—Lausanne, Stockholm, Edinburgh, Oxford, Oslo, Amsterdam, Evanston, and Lund—a new experience of spiritual unity in worship was discovered. Indeed, it was not just an accidental accompaniment to the quest for unity. Instead, worship was realized as the climax of the quest. The Churches came to discuss what they could *do* together; they discovered that they were most profoundly at one when they *worshiped* together. In drawing near to God, through Christ, they drew near to one another.²

At the Edinburgh Conference, in 1937, it was confessed that:

We are all united . . . in the use of Holy Scriptures. We are further united in common prayer which may be expressed in the spoken word, through silence, or by employment of the sacred treasures of Christian literature, art, and music. In this worship we stand before God in adoration of His majesty, bringing to Him our own needs and the needs of our fellows. We wait for His grace in the forgiveness of our sins and for the restoration of our spirits through renewed communion with Him, and we dedicate ourselves to His service and the service of all mankind.³

A former popular and helpful radio program always ended with the assertion: "A family that prays together stays together." That can be the experiences of *families* of churches which we call *denominations* or *communions*. In one community, after an ecumenical service, the secretary of the local council of churches declared "that one service has changed our Council from an organization into an organism." There have been hundreds of ecumenical services held throughout the United States but they should be numbered in the thousands.

²See *Primer for Those Planning Services of Ecumenical Worship*, published by the North American Provisional Committee for the World Council of Churches. Out of print.

³From *The Report of the Second World Conference on Faith and Order*.

What Is Ecumenical Worship?

How does it differ from a union service or other interdenominational worship? A brochure entitled *A Primer for Those Planning Services of Ecumenical Worship*, now out of print, defines it as follows: "It is worship intended to *express* and *further* the *unity* of the *whole* Church of Christ, generally through services held under the auspices of more than one communion and shared in by members of different churches." The definition places the concern for unity upon the heart and conscience of the Christian in the very act of worship itself. It says that "before the unity of the Church can be effected, it must be *felt* and, above all, *willed*." The matter of *intention* is of vital importance not just because the principle of "corporate intention" is an ancient doctrine of the Church but also because it makes us look beneath the outward aspects of a worship service—the hymns, the prayers, the liturgies or lack of them—to the worshiper's purity of purpose. The corporate *deed* must be based upon a corporate *will*—the will "to express and further the unity of the whole Church."⁴

The decisive factor is not the fact of different churches worshipping together. A service held in a local church *may* be more ecumenical than many a *union service*. As the word "ecumenical" becomes more popular there is a tendency to stretch its meaning beyond all bounds and use it to describe all kinds of interchurch and interdenominational activity which, although it be worthy in itself, does not express and further the unity of the whole Church of Christ, the "Holy Church throughout all the world"—to use the words of the *Te Deum*.

True corporate worship is implicitly ecumenical because it transcends the "here and now" and lifts the worshiper above the particular time and place and unites him in the continuity

⁴From "Ecumenicity in Worship," by Roger Hazelton, in *Religion in Life*, Winter, 1949-1950.

of worship in the Church throughout the ages. So, in a sense, any worship which realizes its implicitly *universal* character is ecumenical. To say that, however, is to put a severe test to any service, especially one in which several congregations are united—does it *really* achieve, by finding a least common denominator among our different rites and customs or through the use of familiar hymns or similar devices, the “lifting of the worshiping congregation above the particular time and place and uniting it in the continuity of the worship of the Church throughout all the ages?” Usually it does not. That is why the goal is more often achieved through the use of great traditional acts and prayers which are the common heritage of the Church in all its branches. Both at the great world conferences and also in local experience, services of a formal type have been the more successful. That raises a question in the minds of many—why use so much liturgy, especially when it is expected that many of the worshipers will be quite unaccustomed to even the simplest of liturgical forms?

“Pure worship under the Gospel”—according to an old epistle of the Society of Friends—“stands neither in forms nor in the *formal disuse* of forms.” But we need to come to terms with the claim—so often made by those of the so-called nonliturgical churches—that sincerity depends upon spontaneity while liturgy connotes *formalism*. In his Southworth Lecture (1950) Dr. Hazelton points out the fact that there is scarcely anything more “cut and dried” than the typical “free” or pastoral prayer as offered by many ministers in the morning service unless it is the usual sentence prayer “offered amidst embarrassed silence in an ordinary young people’s meeting on a Sunday evening.” And there are popular misconceptions as to the *formality* of a gown or vestments worn by clergymen. A “cutaway” coat and striped trousers, black or gray tie, if *habitually* worn in the conduct of religious services is just as formal. And all worship which is habitual—even the silent

meeting of the Friends or the altar call at the end of an evangelistic service—is liturgical. Further, when Christians of widely varying traditions unite in an ecumenical service of worship, it is not to be regretted that *some* parts—especially in a service of composite character—will be unfamiliar to *some* of the worshipers. The unfamiliar parts will be a demonstration of the common spirit that underlies all the diverse forms that have stood the test of time, a lesson in worship. The virtue of familiarity is not to be valued more than authenticity, that is, whether the service has the peculiar grace of making vivid the many forms “inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he will.” (1 Corinthians 12:11.)

Beyond all that has been said stands the advantages in using the Church’s riches of worship that date back even to the time before the great divisions—and thus are our common heritage—as well as the treasures to be contributed by the separated Churches in *their classic ages*. Dr. Hazelton writes of these treasures which have been made available through recent liturgical scholarship—including the Holy Scriptures, creative expressions of corporate devotion embodied in ancient liturgies, treasuries of praise and prayer—thus:

The more traditional patterns of worship have this inescapable advantage over the more recent forms; they take us further back toward the primary impulse and initial source of our Christian faith. Worshipping with their help, we come closer home; we cannot but feel what T. S. Eliot calls, so movingly and so finely, “the backing of the dead”; we are caught up more consciously and actively within the history of redemption. Through them we come to see that the Christian faith has its own kind of language, expressive of a depth of mood, a sense of existence, out of the range of habitual vision. We come also to realize something vastly more important—that our task in worship is *not to create something which has not yet occurred but to celebrate what has already happened*. And this sense is what the traditional forms can most richly bestow. In them the ecumenical *fact*

looms above every ecumenical hope, so that as we enter into their spirit our hope takes on, more and more, the character of fact. Modern liturgies are generally strong in aspiration but ancient, medieval and Reformed liturgies are stronger still in adoration. *Where we wish, they announce; where we inquire, they affirm; where we wonder, they exult and praise.*⁵

In addition to the treasures from out of the past, there is now a considerable body of material that has come from the worship at the great ecumenical assemblies.

The *Primer* adds three further factors to be considered in planning services of ecumenical worship. One is that it is almost an essential that the worshipers be informed of the source from which great expressions of worship are taken, especially if there can be advance preparation through a simple interpretation of origins and meanings.

The more effective features of ecumenical services are those which symbolize the unity of the Church at the very points where the external divisions are most obvious. It has been found helpful, for example—since the Church reflects the divisions of humanity on the basis of national origins and of language—for ecumenical worship to “speak in tongues” and traditions which reflect the separations but demonstrate the unity that lies beneath them. For example, the Lord’s Prayer may be recited in different tongues or the Scriptures read in some other language than English.

Again, there is as yet no agreement in the Church as to just what constitutes a minister or priest, yet in offering prayer and praise there is common ground for fellowship in worship. Ecumenical services have generally included, therefore, a procession or some visible grouping of the ministers of participating churches, with each wearing the garb which he would wear in the conduct of worship in his own church.⁶

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Primer for Those Planning, etc.*

A Service of Ecumenical Worship

The Church Federation of Greater Chicago carried through an interesting and rewarding experiment in ecumenical worship, in connection with an observance of the Universal Week of Prayer in 1950. On the closing Sunday of that week, twelve "Area Services of Ecumenical Worship"—sponsored by the Commission on Ecumenical Education—were held in as many sections of Metropolitan Chicago, all at the same hour and using the same Order of Worship.⁷ That Order of Worship included "Notes" which explained in detail both the plan and sequence of the service, and also the origin of its various parts. Since it is the most complete "Order of Ecumenical Worship" available, it is here printed in full.

INTRODUCTORY

Ecumenical worship is intended to express and further the unity of the whole Church of Christ. How shall this intention find expression in this service designed for use by congregations which are composed of people who come from many different traditions of worship? To answer that question we have turned to the experience that has been gained in the great ecumenical gatherings of this century, because those who participated in them bear witness that the worship *did* express and further the unity of the *whole* Church.

This is a composite service. Many parts have come from ancient traditions that characterized the Church before the great divisions. Others have been drawn from the noble expressions of corporate devotion that have arisen in the divided churches. All are parts of our common heritage.

⁷Prepared for the Commission by the author.

To draw near to God, through Christ, is to draw near to each other. Through the act of corporate worship we are lifted above the particular time and place to be united in the continuity of the worship of the Church throughout all ages, and we deepen the consciousness that we belong to a world-wide Christian community.

OUTLINE OF THE SERVICE

The congregation must first become aware that it is meeting in the presence of God, and be led to think of his *power* in creation, his *love* in redemption, and his *sanctifying spirit*. It is fitting, after creating the proper atmosphere for worship, to join in an act of praise and adoration.

Then, the thought of God's *holiness* leads to the recognition of our unworthiness and our sin and our need of forgiveness. Having made humble confession of sin and heard the prayer of absolution, we sing a hymn of thanksgiving.

One of the first fruits of repentance is to seek for direction and inspiration in the renewal of dedication to his obedience. So that we may learn what it is to be under the sovereignty of God and what his will is for us this day, we listen to readings from the Bible and to an exposition of the Word by the preacher.

In response to the Word of God we make certain offerings, first of our substance, then of our prayers through which we fulfill the apostolic injunction to make "supplications, prayers, intercession, thanksgivings . . . for all men." (1 Timothy 2:1.) We sing a hymn of dedication, join in a closing prayer, and then are dismissed.

The Order of Worship

I. THE ACT OF PREPARATION

A. THE ORGAN PRELUDE

B. THE QUIET MOMENTS

The people are invited, on entering the house of worship, to spend the opening moments in meditation. The Scripture Sentences, Meditation, and Prayer are for their guidance.

1. *The Scripture Sentences*

Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them.—Revelation 21:3.

Let us test and examine our ways,
and return to the LORD!

Let us lift up our hearts and hands
to God in the heaven.—Lamentations 3:40-41.

There is . . . one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.—Ephesians 4:6.

2. *The Meditation*

We are all united . . . in the use of the Holy Scriptures. We are further united in common prayer, which may be expressed in the spoken word, through silence, or by the employment of the sacred treasures of Christian literature, art, and music. In this worship we all stand before God in adoration of His majesty, bringing to Him our own needs and the needs of our fellows. We wait for His grace in the forgiveness of our sins and for the restoration of our spirits through renewed communion with Him, and we dedicate ourselves to His service and the service of all mankind.

—*From the Report of the Second World Conference on Faith and Order, 1937.*

3. *The Prayer*

Almighty God, Who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto Thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name Thou wilt grant their requests; Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of Thy servants, as may be most expedient for them, granting us in this world knowledge of Thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. AMEN.

—*A Prayer of St. Chrysostom, fourth century, A.D.*

4. *The Procession*¹

(Let the people stand during the Procession and remain standing to join reverently in the Act of Adoration and Praise.)

II. THE ACT OF ADORATION AND PRAISE

A. THE APOSTOLIC SALUTATION

Minister: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.—1 Corinthians 1:3.

B. THE SURSUM CORDA²

Minister: The Lord be with you.

People: And with thy spirit.

Minister: Lift up your hearts.

People: They are lifted up unto thee, O Lord.

Minister: Let us give thanks unto the Lord God.

People: It is meet and right so to do.

—*From the Canons of Hippolytus, composed in Greek in the third century.*

¹It is customary in many churches, also in many services of ecumenical worship, for the procession of choir and clergy to be accompanied by a processional hymn. This service follows the example of the opening service of the Amsterdam Assembly in 1948, and the Procession takes place accompanied by organ music only. If the Procession is one which is a real visible demonstration of unity, in that it brings together clergymen of different communions, the attention of the congregation is upon the Procession and the singing of the hymn is not a real act of worship.

²The words *Sursum Corda* are Latin for "Lift up your hearts." St. Cyprian of Carthage, who was the first African bishop to suffer martyrdom (A.D. 258), makes the first mention of this gem, which is preserved to us from the services of the ancient Church. The slight difference in wording from that used in some communions arises from the fact that it is translated from the Greek original and not from the Latin copy.

C. THE LITANY OF PRAISE³

Minister: Almighty and everlasting God, before whom stand the spirits of the living and the dead, Fountain of goodness, who livest in all pure and humble souls; for all who have witnessed a good confession for thy glory and the welfare of the world—patriarchs, prophets, apostles, saints, martyrs

People: We praise thee, O Lord, and bless thy name.

Minister: For all those who have been tender and true and brave in all times and places, and for all who have been one with thee in the communion of thy spirit and the strength of thy love

People: We praise thee, O Lord, and bless thy name.

Minister: For thy Church, the pillar and ground of the truth, and the mother of saints in all ages and all lands

People: We praise thee, O Lord, and bless thy name.

Minister: For the light of the everlasting Gospel which thou hast sent to every nation and kindred and tongue and people

People: We praise thee, O Lord, and bless thy name.

D. THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO⁴

Minister and People: Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men. We praise thee, we worship thee, we give thanks to thee for thy glory, O Lord God, the Father Almighty.

(Here let the people be seated)

E. THE ANTHEM OF PRAISE

³*The Litany of Praise* is an adaptation of one in common use for ecumenical services. In the strict usage of some communions, the word *Litany* refers only to a form of responsive *supplication* on penitential occasions. It is used here in the broader sense of responsive prayer.

⁴*The Gloria in Excelsis Deo* (from the Latin, meaning "Glory to God in the Highest") is one of the oldest hymns of the Church. It was composed under the inspiration of Luke 2:14 and is often called the *Great Doxology*. It is known to have existed before the Council of Nicaea, A.D. 325 and its present form is attributed to St. Hilary, a Bishop of France, who died in 368. It is often used for any high act of thanksgiving.

III. THE ACT OF PENITENCE AND PARDON

A. THE EXHORTATION

Minister: This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:5-6, 7-8.) Let us, then, humbly confess our sins to Almighty God.

(Here let the people kneel or reverently bow in prayer)

B. THE PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Minister and People: Almighty and most merciful God, our heavenly Father, we confess that we have grievously sinned against thee in thought, word, and deed. We have come short of thy glory. We have broken the unity of thy holy Church. We have turned every one of us away from thy way of life. Yet do thou, O most merciful Father, hear us when we call upon thee with penitent hearts. Pardon our sins and grant us thy peace. Confirm us in all goodness, that we may serve thee with a quiet mind, and bring us to the life everlasting; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Used at the opening service of the World Conference on Faith and Order, 1937.

C. THE PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION⁵

⁵Note that the people respond with the spoken Amen. It is recognized that this is not the custom in many Protestant churches, but in *this* service the practice is adopted because it follows the usage of devout worshippers in ancient time. See Deuteronomy, chapter 27, and Psalm 106:48 where the instructions are that "all the people shall say 'Amen!'" and also the usage of Christians in Paul's day as is reflected in 1 Corinthians 14:16 "... how can any one in the position of an outsider say the 'Amen' to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying?"

Minister: O Lord, we beseech thee, absolve thy people from their offenses, that through thy bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the bands of those sins which by our frailty we have committed. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our Blessed Lord and Saviour.

—*From the Gregorian Sacramentary, A.D. 590.*

People: Amen.

(Here let the people rise and join in singing)

D. THE HYMN OF THANKSGIVING

"Praise to the Lord," Joaquin Neander, 1680

Tune: *Lobe Den Herren, Stralsund Gesangbuch*, 1665

IV. THE WORD OF GOD

A. THE READING FROM THE EPISTLES⁶

Ephesians 1:3-10; 15-23

B. THE READING FROM THE GOSPELS

(Here let the people stand)

Minister: The Holy Gospel is written in the 17th Chapter of St. John, beginning at the 20th verse.

People: Glory be to thee, O Lord.

(Here follows the reading of the Gospel)

Minister: Here endeth the reading from the Gospel.

People: O Lord, give us understanding according to thy word, for great peace have they which love thy law. Thy word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Glory be to thee, O Lord, our light and our truth. Amen.—*Adapted from Psalm 119.*

(Let the people remain standing)

⁶Paul's letter to the Ephesians has been called "the charter of the ecumenical Church."

C. THE HYMN OF PRAISE FOR THE WORD

"O Word of God Incarnate," William Walsham How, 1867
Tune: *Munich*, From an old German Chorale, 1693

(Here let the people be seated)

D. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE WORD—THE SERMON

V. THE RESPONSE TO THE WORD

A. THE OFFERING OF SUBSTANCE⁷

B. THE OFFERTORY ANTHEM

(When the offering is brought forward, let all stand and join in singing.)

C. THE DOXOLOGY

D. THE OFFERING OF INTERCESSION

Minister: We are severally members of the Body of Christ.

We should have the same care for one another, suffering for one another, rejoicing with one another. Let us, therefore, pray for the whole Church of Christ.

(Here let the people kneel or reverently bow in prayer)

Minister: Hear us, O Lord, we beseech thee, as we pray: For the whole Church of Christ, scattered abroad through the world and bearing many names;

People: We beseech thee to hear us, O Lord.

Minister: For the Churches that are passing through times of suffering and persecution, that their faith and courage may not fail or their love grow cold.

People: Save them and us, we beseech thee, O Lord.

⁷*The Offering of Substance* will be received according to the usage in the host church. The custom of singing the Doxology at the presentation of the offering is widely followed. This is "The Doxology," which is sung in Christian Churches all over the world. The familiar tune "Old 100th" comes from the *Genevan Psalter* of John Calvin's day in Switzerland.

Minister: For the younger Churches of Asia, Africa, and the islands of the sea, that they may grow into the full stature of the completeness of Christ, bringing new treasures into the Church of the ages.

People: Direct their steps and ours, we beseech thee, O Lord.

Minister: For the older Churches of the East and West, that they may increase in wisdom and humility and find new ways to make the message of the gospel understood in the world today.

People: Renew them and us, we beseech thee, O Lord.

Minister: For each of our several branches of the Church, whatever it may be, that we may hold fast to the truth, be delivered from error, and walk with one another in the way of love and unity.

People: Teach us and guide us, we beseech thee, O Lord.

Minister: For all the movements—in the cities and towns, in our nation and throughout the world—dedicated to the unity of the Church, that through them Christians may transcend their differences and be knit together in a fellowship of love in the name of Christ.

People: Draw us all nearer to one another and to thee, O Lord.

(Here, in a period of silence, let the unspoken petitions of our hearts be offered to Him who hears prayer.)

Minister and People: O Sovereign and Almighty God, bless all thy people and all thy flock. Give peace, thy help, thy love unto us thy servants, the sheep of thy fold, that we may be united in the bond of peace, one body and one spirit, in one hope of our calling, in thy divine and boundless love; for the sake of Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep. Amen.

—*From the Liturgy of St. Mark, second century.*

E. THE LORD'S PRAYER

(Here let the people stand)

F. THE HYMN OF DEDICATION

"At Length There Dawns the Glorious Day,"

Ozora S. Davis, 1909

Tune: All Saints, New

Henry S. Cutler, 1900

(Here let the people be seated)

G. THE CLOSING COLLECT⁸

Unison: O Christ, our only Savior, so dwell within us that we may go forth with the light of hope in our eyes, and the fire of inspiration on our lips, thy Word on our tongues, and thy love in our hearts. Amen.

—*Used in the Closing Service of the Amsterdam Assembly*

H. THE DISMISSAL⁹

I. THE POSTLUDE

⁸The term "collect" is of Latin origin (*collectio*) meaning "to gather up, or collect in prayer." It is characterized by brevity and vigor and usually presents a single profound and universal petition. The collect is known to every liturgy in the West.

⁹This will be after the manner which is customary in the host church. The most common form of dismissal is the pronouncement of the benediction, followed by a moment of silent prayer and ending with a choral "Amen." There is usually, also, an organ postlude during the period when the people are dispersing.

Joining the Church Universal

This service has been prepared in response to the growing enthusiasm among young people for the idea of the ecumenical Church. Its purpose is to receive them into membership not only of the local church but also of the fellowship or denomination to which the congregation belongs and of the Church Universal which includes all Christian Churches. The service is designed for Whitsunday, the seventh Sunday after Easter.

An increasing number of churches are holding the Pastor's Class or Confirmation Class or whatever class prepares young people for church membership during the period following Easter rather than during Lent. This custom helps to avoid the letdown which sometimes characterizes the educational program of the churches after the Easter season. It also uses the obvious values to be found in receiving new members on the Day of Pentecost, the Church's birthday.

If the ecumenical movement means anything, it is that membership in the Church Universal must be a living and dynamic reality in the lives of church members. The place to begin is at the beginning of membership.

A service that has dramatic intensity and legitimate emotional appeal can make an indelible impression on young members. Some churches will not, by reason of prescribed rituals, be able to follow these suggestions, but many, even those who follow a customary ritual, may be able to make an exception once a year and use at least some of the features suggested.

Opening Service

ORGAN PRELUDE

PROCESSIONAL HYMN—(Suggested: "Lead on, O King Eternal")

(The prospective members may march in procession behind the Christian flag—following the choir if a choir procession is customary. If so desired, it will add to the solemnity of the service if all are robed—like the catechumens in the early Church—in white. If preferred, the Processional Hymn may be omitted and the young people march in silently during the Prelude. They should sit as a body in the front pews of a single section.)

THE APOSTOLIC SALUTATION

Minister: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.—1 Corinthians 1:3

AN ACT OF ADORATION AND PRAISE

THE SURSUM CORDA

Minister: The Lord be with you.

People: And with thy spirit.

Minister: Lift up your hearts.

People: They are lifted up unto thee, O Lord.

Minister: Let us give thanks unto the Lord God.

People: It is meet and right so to do.

—From the Canons of Hippolytus, composed in Greek in the third century.

Minister: Almighty and everlasting God, before whom stand the spirits of the living and the dead: for all who have witnessed a good confession for thy glory and the welfare of the world—patriarchs, prophets, saints, and apostles

People: We praise thee, O Lord, and bless thy name.

Minister: For all the martyrs of the faith and for all who have resisted wrong unto suffering and death

People: We praise thee, O Lord, and bless thy name.

Minister: For thy Church, the pillar and ground of the truth, and the mother of saints in all ages and in all lands

People: We praise thee, O Lord, and bless thy name.

Minister: For the light of the everlasting Gospel, which thou hast sent to every nation and kindred and tongue and people

People: We praise thee, O Lord, and bless thy name.

Minister and People: Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace, good will toward men. We praise thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, the Father Almighty. Amen.

ANTHEM

SCRIPTURE LESSON

PASTORAL PRAYER

OFFERING

(These will be in accordance with the customs of the individual church but, obviously, the thought of the Church Universal and those "upon whom the Spirit came" at the Pentecost should dominate.)

(Note: If the minister feels that he must preach, let the sermon be brief. The intention is that the dramatic reception of members will take the place of the regular sermon.)

The Reception of Members

EPISODE I. The Message of the Church Universal.

HYMN (*sung by all*): "O God, Our Help in Ages Past."

(During the singing of this hymn the "Spirit of the Church Universal" enters at the rear of the house of worship and proceeds to the center of the chancel or pulpit platform. This part should be played by a young woman of exceptional Christian devotion, good stature, strong and pleasing voice. Much depends upon the choice of this person. She should be clad in flowing white robes and should wear, emblazoned on her bodice, a golden cross. This can easily be made of gilt paper and fastened to the robe.)

MESSAGE OF THE SPIRIT OF THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL: I am the Spirit of the Church Universal, that deathless fellowship established by the chosen few upon whom the Spirit came at Pentecost, that living community of the living Lord Jesus Christ entrusted with carrying out the design of God to unite all mankind in Christ and establish on earth his kingdom of love and light. I invite you into the world-wide fellowship of those who have committed themselves to the Lord of the Church. All about you is the cloud of witnesses of those who for nineteen centuries have kept the faith in spite of dungeon, fire, and sword. They have labored and you may enter into the fruit of their labors. During these centuries I have seen kingdoms rise, flourish for a season, and then perish, but the Church of Christ remains for even the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. In the darkest days of history, it alone preserved the light. Today, as in ancient days, it is the hope of humanity.

Young people of today (*here let the candidates rise*), you have presented yourselves for membership in (*here insert the name of the local church*), but it is significant only as it is a

true part of the one, holy, universal Church which is the corporate Body of Christ and faithfully carries on the work which he did when in Palestine he walked and talked with men. What say you concerning your desire to enter the Church Universal?

RESPONSE OF THE CANDIDATES:

In seeking membership in the (insert name of local church) we desire to become members of the Church Universal, representatives of Christianity in all lands and ages. We know that we shall be bound in loyalty to that great Church far more than to any local church or denomination to which we may belong. We would be an organ of Christian unity, stewards of the whole Church's spiritual heritage, of the whole Church's endowment as a channel for the love of God. We would make St. Augustine's words our own: "I take the whole Christ for my Saviour; I take the whole Bible for my staff; I take the whole Church for my fellowship."¹

EPISODE II. The Message of the Denomination.

HYMN (*sung by all*)

(The hymn should be especially suitable to the theme of the contribution to the Church Universal which the particular denomination has made; e.g. in a Congregational Christian Church it might be "O God, Beneath Thy Guiding Hand.")

As in the first episode, the singing of the hymn marks the entrance of one who will portray the spirit of the denomination. For instance, in a Methodist Church, it would be one who impersonated the spirit of John Wesley; in a Baptist Church, it might be Roger Williams; in a Presbyterian Church, John Knox—and so forth.

¹Adapted from words of the late Principal Davidson of Canada.

THE MESSAGE OF THE DENOMINATION

(This is spoken to the young people by the person representing the denomination. It should catch up, in two or three minutes, the very greatest things which the denomination has contributed to the world, and call the young people to follow.)

THE RESPONSE: *(This will, of course, be fitted to the message which has been given.)*

EPISODE III. The Message of the Leaders of the Local Church

HYMN (one of service)

(During the hymn let the church leaders come forward—the chairman of the Board of Trustees, a representative of the Board of Deacons or Elders or whatever body is charged with the spiritual welfare of the church, the president of the women's organization, the superintendent of the church school, the president of the young people's society, etc. After the hymn, each should present, in a one-minute message, the opportunity for service in the local church.)

THE RESPONSE—an act of dedication, sealed by prayer.

EPISODE IV. The Actual Reception of the Members.

(Churches which practice immersion will baptize members according to their usage. Churches which baptize by sprinkling [those who are not previously baptized] will find that this may be an especially impressive act if the young people, one at a time, kneel, facing the congregation; and if the form "Disciple of Jesus," or, "Follower of the Master," or similar phrase in place of the Christian name, is used by the minister when saying "I baptize thee, etc.")

In receiving the candidates into membership the minister may include some such phrase as: "We rejoice to recognize you as members of the Church Universal. . . ."

Many churches have the custom of asking the congregation to rise and give a welcome to the new members and a pledge to them of prayerful help.

Where the architecture of the church, and the "temper of the congregation" permit, this part may end in the formation of an endless chain of hands clasped in the bonds of Christian love. All may then sing together the old favorite hymn "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.")

THE ASCRIPTION: Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.—Ephesians 3:20-21.

Appendix II

Great Ecumenical Affirmations

Not all great affirmations of ecumenical truth have been uttered in world conferences and so preserved in the published records. Many that found publication only, if at all, in transient form deserve to be remembered. The following are among the best:

1. *The Declaration of an Ecumenical Christian*

At baptism I was admitted to no local or sectional order. The intention was to make me a member of the Church of Christ. As a member of the Church Universal, a representative of Christianity in all lands and all ages, I am bound in loyalty to that Great Church *far more* than to the particular denomination or local church to which I belong. I am an organ of Christian unity; a steward of the whole Church's spiritual heritage, of the whole Church's vision of truth and duty, of the whole Church's ranges of devotion, of the whole Church's resources in organization for fellowship and the cure of souls, of the whole Church's endowment as a channel for the grace of God. I should like, if it be not presumptuous to appropriate St. Augustine's words: "I take the whole Christ for my Saviour; I take the whole Bible for my staff; I take the whole Church for my fellowship."

—By the late Principal Davidson of Canada,
a member of the Continuation Committee of
the World Conference on Faith and Order.

2. "For Life, for Death, . . . we are One"

A "United Service of International Christian Witness" was held in Westminster Abbey, London, on Whitsunday, 1942. Representatives of the churches of seventeen countries joined with those of the Anglican and Free Churches of England in worship. The Affirmation from that service is as follows:

As members of the Universal Church, drawn from many lands, we join together in Westminster Abbey on this third Whitsunday of the war, for the worship of Almighty God. Across the divisions of race and nation, we declare our loyalty to the universal fellowship of the Christian Church which God has created by His Holy Spirit. Across the breaches caused by human violence, we affirm our unity with all those, wherever they are, who witness to the Word of God and hold fast in face of persecution to their Christian confession. British and French, Belgian and Swiss, Scandinavian and Dutch, German and Pole, Greek and Slav, with our brethren from the far lands of America, Africa and Asia, together we stand here as one man in Christ. Together we declare that the Lord he is God, and that men or nations are guilty of idolatry when they put any creature in His place. Together we proclaim that Christ is our Saviour, in whom alone is given the way of peace and reconciliation between man and man, nation and nation. Together we give thanks for all the faithful who have fought the good fight and finished their course. *For life, for death and for the life beyond we are one with the whole Church in heaven and on earth.*¹

3. Treysa Conference Declaration

The organization of the "Evangelical Church of Germany" (1945) brought together Lutheran and Reformed Churches of both radical and moderate wings. At the Conference, in Treysa, the German Protestant leaders who formed the new Church issued a noble statement, as follows:

God's wrath has broken upon us. God's hand is heavy upon us. It is only by the goodness of God that we are not completely destroyed.

¹*Courier*, 2, No. 2.

Today we admit: Long before God spoke in wrath, He sought us with the words of His love and we did not listen. Long before our Churches became piles of rubble, our pulpits were restricted and our prayers were silenced. Shepherds allowed their flocks to languish, and congregations deserted their pastors.

Long before the sham government of our land broke down, justice had been thwarted. Long before men were murdered, men had become mere ciphers, and for this very reason, of no worth. When a man's life becomes worthless, he thinks nothing of taking human life.

But in spite of all the failure of the Church and the people, God has given men and women of many faiths strength to oppose injustice and arbitrariness even to the point of suffering and death. Now the door is open once again. Those prayers which we had to say silently behind walls and those plans which we had to make in secret can now be brought out into the open. Many godly people in the darkness of a prison cell and the forced idleness which came with it have thought out the new order for the Church and the people. Now anyone who as a Christian publicly takes over responsibility wants supremely to serve, and does not seek power.

The Church, too, has lost its fetters. It hopes for something new for its preaching and its order. Its erstwhile captivity has ended and for that we rejoice. And so we stand before Evangelical Christianity and call upon pastors and people for a Church reborn. We call to our people: Turn again to God!

With your feeble strength take part in the work of love, with which we are seeking to alleviate the worst suffering. Be merciful! Do not add to the uncharitableness of which there is too much in the world already! Avoid revenge and wicked talk! Let us seek God's Will in every rank and calling! Do not escape suffering and hunger by flying unto death! "He who has faith will never flee." Christ will refresh the weary and heavy-laden. He remains our Saviour. No hell can be so powerful that God cannot overcome it. Fear not!²

4. *A Brave Letter of Resignation*

The Christian world thrilled to hear the story of the stand taken by leaders of the Church of Norway against the Quisling Government. Bishop Berggrav, the Primate, his

²*Ibid.*, 5, No. 3.

fellow Bishops, and nearly all the clergymen resigned their positions as members of the government (because it is a state Church) although continuing to serve their congregations as pastors. The closing paragraph of Bishop Berggrav's letter of resignation is a heroic declaration. In part it is as follows:

. . . The spiritual calling which has been ordained to me at the altar of God remains mine, by God and by right. To be the mouth-piece of the Holy Word, to care for the congregations and to be the spiritual father of the priests, is and continues to be my call. I shall in the future attend to this as far as is possible for one who is not an official. But to continue administrative co-operation with a State which uses violence against the Church would be to fail in that which is most sacred. Together with Luther, we have tried to be loyal to authority as long as it was consistent with the Scriptures. But as for Luther, so for us, too, the moment has arrived in which we must follow our convictions, and maintain the right of the Church against the injustice of the State. The form of the State may change, but the Church and its Fathers-in-God know that against what Luther calls tyranny stands God Himself in the power of His Word and Spirit. Woe to us if we were not to obey God more than man.³

5. "*Denominational*" versus "*Ecumenical*" Giving

Dr. J. Huchison Cockburn of Scotland took the post of Senior Secretary of the Department of Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid of the World Council of Churches in 1945 and filled the post with distinction. Since he had held the highest position in his own Church, Moderator of the Church of Scotland, his statement was of especial significance. In part it is as follows:

The principles of ecumenical reconstruction work are to be found in the nature of the Universal Church, in the truth that when one member suffers, all the others suffer with it, and despite is done to the body itself. Ecumenical giving is inspired, therefore, by the determination that all who can should help all who need, and the ex-

³*Ibid.*, 2, No. 1.

perience of the Church is that those churches help themselves most to a new life and vigor which have vision enough and courage enough to help others. This is true even in the case of one denomination helping a sister denomination in another country; but it is more abundantly true when giving rises above denominationalism to ecumenism. *The fundamental truth of the universality of the Church of Christ compels us to recognize that denominational giving, however natural, is not the highest, and that ecumenical giving is a real work of the Grace of God.* The truth of this has already dawned in some quarters but not in all. But I am convinced that on its wider recognition and practice depends the progress of the Christian Church throughout the world.⁴

6. From "Under the Cross"

While World War II was still in progress, a group of about forty men and women, friends of the World Council of Churches, met near Geneva to discuss the situation in the churches, their future tasks and their relationship to the Council. Some of them had known what it is to be "under the cross" of persecution and suffering in loyalty to their Christian convictions. All had been very close to the churches of Europe which had been passing through fiery trials. Portions of the message which this group adopted and sent to the churches of the world has permanent value and should be recorded among great ecumenical affirmations.

As we looked at the state of the world, and especially that of Europe, we came to realize anew the process of spiritual destruction with which we shall have to deal. The revolt against the God of the Old and New Testaments is so radical that aggressive paganism will remain a force with which we shall have to contend for a long time. The moral and social structure of certain countries has been shaken to such a degree that its very foundations have been undermined. To be sure, many people have learned through suffering to take spiritual realities seriously but, on the whole, our nations have not realized the gravity of the warning given to them.

⁴*Ibid.*, 6, No. 1.

Nevertheless, we have also been able to see how God reassembles His people in an apparently desperate situation and prepares them for His work of reconstruction. During those years of trial many churches have become aware that "judgment must begin at the house of God." They have become ready to listen to "what the Spirit says to the Churches." And so the eternal truths strike home as the most actual and dynamic discoveries. These churches turn to the Bible as to the only word which creates new life. They understand that the reign of Christ is not an ideal but a present reality. They learn that the Church exists in order to proclaim what God has done in the past, is doing today, and will do in the future.

* * *

Among our churches some have suffered. . . . For them, the decisive question will be whether, once their distress is relieved, they will cease to call upon God, to live within narrow limits, or whether they will decide to live in the vast realm of the Spirit, and help other churches to enter it.

As for the churches which have been spared and which are privileged to bear the chief responsibility for Reconstruction, they will remember that the true reconstruction prayer: "Build Thou the Walls of Jerusalem" comes from a "broken and a contrite heart" (Psalm 51:17-18). They will render their greatest service to the Church Universal and to humanity in general, if they too allow themselves to be reconstructed, thus participating in the solidarity of the *Una Sancta*⁵ purified by its Lord.⁶

7. *Affirmation of Unity*

The affirmation of unity which has had the widest use among the churches and is of permanent value is that which was unanimously adopted at the Second World Conference on Faith and Order, meeting in Edinburgh, 1937. It follows:

⁵*Una Sancta* or *Una Sancta Catholica* is a familiar term to European Christians. It signifies the *One Holy* and Universal Church, e.g., the "Holy Catholic Church" of the Apostles' Creed.

⁶From *Under the Cross*, a brochure issued by World Council of Churches. Out of print.

We are one in faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God. We are one in allegiance to Him as Head of the Church, and as King of kings and Lord of lords. We are one in acknowledging that this allegiance takes precedence of any other allegiance that may make claims upon us.

This unity does not consist in the agreement of our minds or the consent of our wills. It is founded in Jesus Christ Himself, Who lived, died and rose again to bring us to the Father, and Who through the Holy Spirit dwells in His Church. We are one because we are all the objects of the love and grace of God, and called by Him to witness in all the world to His glorious gospel.

Our unity is of heart and spirit. We are divided in the outward forms of our life in Christ, because we understand differently His will for His Church. We believe however that a deeper understanding will lead us towards a united apprehension of the truth as it is in Jesus.

We humbly acknowledge that our divisions are contrary to the will of Christ, and we pray God in His mercy to shorten the days of our separation and to guide us by His Spirit into fulness of unity.

We are thankful that during recent years we have been drawn together; prejudices have been overcome, misunderstandings removed, and real, if limited, progress has been made towards our goal of a common mind.

In this Conference we may gratefully claim that the Spirit of God has made us willing to learn from one another, and has given us a fuller vision of the truth and enriched our spiritual experience.

We have lifted up our hearts together in prayer; we have sung the same hymns; together we have read the same Holy Scriptures. We recognize in one another, across the barriers of our separation, a common Christian outlook and a common standard of values. We are therefore assured of a unity deeper than our divisions.

We are convinced that our unity of spirit and aim must be embodied in a way that will make it manifest to the world, though we do not yet clearly see what outward form it should take.

We believe that every sincere attempt to co-operate in the concerns of the Kingdom of God draws the several communions together in increased mutual understanding and good will. We call upon our fellow-Christians of all communions to practice such co-operation; to consider patiently occasions of disunion that they may be overcome; to be ready to learn from those who differ from them; to seek to

remove those obstacles to the furtherance of the gospel in the non-Christian world which arise from our divisions; and constantly to pray for that unity which we believe to be our Lord's will for His Church.

We desire also to declare to all men everywhere our assurance that Christ is the one hope of unity for the world in face of the distractions and dissensions of this present time. We know that our witness is weakened by our divisions. Yet we are one in Christ and in the fellowship of His Spirit. We pray that everywhere, in a world divided and perplexed, men may turn to Jesus Christ our Lord, Who makes us one in spite of our divisions; that He may bind in one those who by many worldly claims are set at variance; and that the world may at last find peace and unity in Him; to Whom be glory for ever.⁷

⁷*Official Report of the Second World Conference on Faith and Order.*

Appendix III

Insignia

1. *Insignia Used on Literature of the World Council of Churches*

The design at right was used unofficially by the American Committee, and still appears on some pieces of literature. The mariner's compass is symbolic for what John Oxenham describes in his well-known lines:

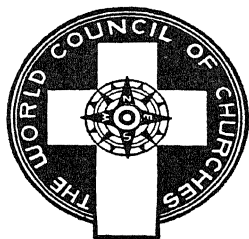
From North and South, and East
and West,

They come!

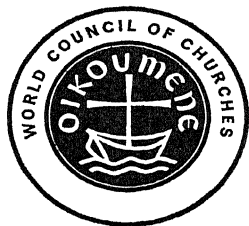
In a Holy exaltation,

With a sound of jubilation,

They come! They come!



The design now used on literature of the World Council of Churches, shown at the right, signifies the Church (represented as the ark or ship—an ancient symbol for the Church. Our word *Nave*, used of the main body of a church, translates the Latin, *navis* (ship), bearing the cross over the sea of life. Olive branches signify peace and healing.



Appendix IV

List of Member Churches

List of Member Churches in the World Council of Churches
(173 church bodies in 55 countries, as of January 1, 1960)

ARGENTINA

Sinodo Evangelico Aleman Del Rio De La Plata

AUSTRALASIA

Methodist Church of Australasia

AUSTRALIA

Church of England in Australia and Tasmania

Congregational Union of Australia

Federal Conference of Churches of Christ in Australia

Presbyterian Church of Australia

AUSTRIA

Evangelische Kirche A.U.H.B. in Oesterreich (Evangelical Church of the
Augsburgian and Helvetic Confession)

BELGIUM

Eglise Chretienne Missionnaire Belge (Belgian Christian Missionary Church)

Union Des Eglises Evangeliques Protestantes De Belgique (Union of
Protestant Evangelical Churches of Belgium)

BRAZIL

Igreja Metodista Do Brasil (Methodist Church of Brazil)

Federacao Sinodal Igreja Evangelica De Confisao Lutherana Do Brasil
(Synodal Federation, Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil)

BURMA

Burma Baptist Convention, 143 St. John's Road, Rangoon.

CAMEROUN

Eglise Evangelique Du Cameroun (Presbyterian Church of Cameroun)

CANADA

The Anglican Church of Canada

Churches of Christ (Disciples)

Presbyterian Church in Canada

United Church of Canada
Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends

CENTRAL AFRICA

The Church of the Province of Central Africa

CEYLON

Methodist Church in Ceylon

CHINA

China Baptist Council
Chung-Hua Chi-Tu Chiao-Hui (Church of Christ in China)
Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui (Church in China)
Hua Pei Kung Li Hui (North China Congregational Church)

CYPRUS

Church of Cyprus

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Ceskobratska Cirkev Evangelicka (Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren)
Evangelicka Cirkev A. V. Na Slovensku (Evangelical Church in Slovakia,
Augsburgian Confession)
Ref. Cirkev Na Slovensku (Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia)
Slezska Cirkev Evangelicka A.V. (Evangelical Church of the Augsburgian
Confession in Silesia)

DENMARK

Baptist Union of Denmark
Den Evangelislutherske Folkekirke I Danmark (Church of Denmark)

EAST AFRICA

Presbyterian Church of East Africa

EGYPT

Coptic Orthodox Church
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria

ETHIOPIA

Ethiopian Orthodox Church

FINLAND

Suomen Evankelis-Luterilainen Kirkko (Evangelical Lutheran Church of
Finland)

FORMOSA

Tai-oan Ki-Tok Tiu-lo Kau-Hoe (Presbyterian Church in Formosa)

FRANCE

Eglise De La Confession D'Augsbourg D'Alsace et De Lorraine (Evan-
gelical Church of the Augsburgian Confession in Alsace and Lorraine)
Eglise Evangelique Luthérienne De France (Evangelical Lutheran Church
in France)
Eglise Reformee D'Alsace et de Lorraine (Reformed Church of Alsace and
Lorraine)
Eglise Reformee De France (Reformed Church of France)

GERMANY

Alt-katholische Kirche in Deutschland (Old Catholic Church in Germany)
Evangelische Breuder-Unitaet (Moravian Church)
Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Evangelical Church in Germany)
Evangelische Kirche in Berlin-Brandenburg
Pommersche Evangelische Kirche
Evangelische Kirche Von Schlesien
Evangelische Kirche Der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen

Evangelische Kirche Von Westfalen
 Evangelische Kirche in Rheinland
 Evangelisch-Lutherische Landeskirche Sachsens*
 Evangelisch-Lutherische Landeskirche Hannovers*
 Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern*
 Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Thueringen*
 Evangelisch-Lutherische Landeskirche Schleswig-Holsteins*
 Evangelisch-Lutherische Landeskirche Im Hamburgischen Staate*
 Evangelisch-Lutherische Landeskirche Mecklenburgs*
 Braunschweigische Evangelisch-Lutherische Landeskirche*
 Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Luebeck*
 Evangelisch-Lutherische Landeskirche in Schaumburg-Lippe*
 Evangelische Landeskirche in Wuerttemberg
 Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Oldenburg
 Evangelisch-Lutherische Landeskirche Eutin
 Evangelische Kirche in Hessen und Nassau
 Evangelische Landeskirche in Kurhessen-Waldeck
 Evangelische Landeskirche in Baden
 Vereinigte Protestantische Kirche Der Pfalz
 Evangelische Landeskirche Anhalts
 Bremische Evangelische Kirche
 Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirche in Nordwestdeutschland
 Lippische Landeskirche
 Vereinigung Der Deutschen Mennonitengemeinden (Mennonite Church)

GHANA

Presbyterian Church of Ghana

GREECE

Ekklesia Tes Ellados (Church of Greece)

Greek Evangelical Church

HUNGARY

A Magyarorszagi Evangelikus Egyhaz (Lutheran Church of Hungary)

A Magyarorszagi Reformatus Egyhaz (Reformed Church of Hungary)

Baptist Church of Hungary

ICELAND

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland

INDIA

Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon

*This Church is directly a member of the World Council of Churches in accordance with the resolution of the General Synod of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany, dated 27 January 1949, which recommended that the member churches of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church should make the following declaration to the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany concerning their relation to the World Council of Churches:

"The Evangelical Church in Germany has made it clear through its constitution that it is a federation (Bund) of confessionally determined churches. Moreover, the conditions of membership of the World Council of Churches have been determined at the Assembly at Amsterdam. Therefore, this Evangelical Lutheran Church declares concerning its membership in the World Council of Churches:

- i) It is represented in the World Council as a church of the Evangelical Lutheran confession.
- ii) Representatives which it sends to the World Council are to be identified as Evangelical Lutherans.
- iii) Within the limits of the competence of the Evangelical Church of Germany it is represented in the World Council through the intermediary of the Council of the Evangelical Church of Germany."

Church of South India

Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India

Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar

Orthodox Syrian Church of Malabar Catholicate

United Church of Northern India and Pakistan

INDONESIA

Geredja Kalimantan Evangelis (Kalimantan Evangelical Church)

Geredja Kristen Sulawesi Tengah (Christian Church of Mid-Celebes)

Geredja Kristen Djawa Wetan (Christian Church of East Java)

Geredja Masehi Indjili Di Minahasa (Christian Church of Minahasa)

Geredja Masehi Indjili Timor (Christian Evangelical Church of Timor)

Huria Kristen Batak Protestant (Huria Christian Batak Protestant Church)

Geredja Geredja Kristen Di Djawa Tengah (Christian Churches of Mid Java)

Geredja Protestant Maluku (Protestant Church of the Moluccas)

Geredja Protestant Di Indonesia (Protestant Church in Indonesia)

Gereformeerde Kerken in Indonesia

IRAN

Synod of the Evangelical Churches of North Iran

ITALY

Chiesa Evangelica Metodista D'Italia (Evangelical Methodist Church of Italy)

Chiesa Evangelica Valdese (Waldensian Church)

JAPAN

Nippon Kirisuto Kyodan (United Church of Christ in Japan)

Nippon Sei Ko Kwai (Anglican Church in Japan)

JORDAN

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem

KOREA

Korean Methodist Church

Presbyterian Church of Korea

LEBANON

Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East

MEXICO

Iglesia Metodista De Mejico (Methodist Church of Mexico)

NETHERLANDS

Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit (General Mennonite Society)

Bond Van Vrije Evangelische Gemeenten in Nederland (Union of Free Evangelical Congregations)

Evangelisch Lutherse Kerk (Evangelical Lutheran Church)

Nederlands Hervormde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church)

Oud-Katholieke Kerk (Old Catholic Church)

Remonstrantse Broederschap (Arminian Church)

Unie Van Baptisten Gemeenten in Nederland (Union of Baptist Congregations)

NEW ZEALAND

Associated Churches of Christ in New Zealand

Baptist Union of New Zealand

Church of the Province of New Zealand (Church of England)

Congregational Union of New Zealand

Methodist Church of New Zealand

Presbyterian Church of New Zealand

NORWAY

Norske Kirke (Church of Norway)

PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

Iglesia Catolica Filipine Independiente (Philippine Independent Church)
United Church of Christ in the Philippines

POLAND

Kosciol Ewangelicko-Augsburski W Polsce (Evangelical Church of the
Augsburgian Confession)
Polski Narodowy Kosciol Katolicki (Catholic Church of Poland)

RUMANIA

Biserica Lutherana Ungara Din Romania (Hungarian Lutheran Church in
Rumania)
Biserica Protestanta Evangelica Din Romania Dupa Confesiunea Dela Au
Burg (Protestant Evangelical Church Augsb. Confession)
Biserica Reformata Din Romania (Transylvanian Reformed Church)

SOUTH AFRICA

Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa
Church of the Province of South Africa
Congregational Union of South Africa
Methodist Church of South Africa
Ned. Gereformeerde Kerk van de Kaap Provinsie (Dutch Reformed Church
of South Africa of the Cape Province)
Ned. Gereformeerde Kerk van Transvaal (Dutch Reformed Church of
Transvaal)
Nederduits Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (Dutch Reformed Church of
Africa)
Presbyterian Church of South Africa

SPAIN

Iglesia Evangelica Española (Spanish Evangelical Church)

SWEDEN

Svenska Kyrkan (Church of Sweden)
Svenska Missionsfoerbundet (Mission Covenant Church of Sweden)

SWITZERLAND

Christkatholische Kirche Der Schweiz (Old Catholic Church)
Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund—Federation Des Eglises
Protestantes De La Suisse (Swiss Protestant Church Federation)

SYRIA (See also Lebanon)

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch
Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon

THAILAND

Church of Christ in Thailand

TURKEY

Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

UNITED KINGDOM AND EIRE

Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland
Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland
Church of England
Church of Ireland
Church of Scotland
Church in Wales
Congregational Union of England and Wales
Congregational Union of Scotland
Episcopal Church in Scotland

- Methodist Church
- Methodist Church in Ireland
- Moravian Church in Great Britain and Ireland
- Presbyterian Church of England
- Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- Presbyterian Church of Wales
- Salvation Army
- United Free Church of Scotland
- UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 - African Methodist Episcopal Church
 - African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
 - American Baptist Convention
 - American Evangelical Lutheran Church
 - American Lutheran Church
 - Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church
 - Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
 - Church of the Brethren
 - Evangelical Lutheran Church
 - Evangelical United Brethren Church
 - Holy Apostolic Catholic Church of the East (Assyrians)
 - Hungarian Reformed Church in America
 - International Convention of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ)
 - The Methodist Church
 - Moravian Church in America (Northern Province)
 - Moravian Church in America (Southern Province)
 - National Baptist Convention of America
 - National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. Inc.
 - Polish National Catholic Church of America
 - Presbyterian Church in the U. S.
 - Protestant Episcopal Church
 - Reformed Church in America
 - The Religious Society of Friends
 - Five Years Meeting of Friends
 - Friends General Conference
 - Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America
 - Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America
 - Seventh Day Baptist General Conference
 - Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Church (Archdiocese of New York and All North America)
 - United Church of Christ
 - Congregational Christian Churches of the United States of America
 - Evangelical and Reformed Church
 - United Evangelical Lutheran Church
 - United Lutheran Church in America
 - United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America
- WEST AFRICA
 - The Church of the Province of West Africa
- WEST INDIES
 - Anglican Church of the West Indies
 - The Presbyterian Church of Jamaica
- YUGOSLAVIA
 - Reformed Christian Church of Yugoslavia
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 - Eesti Ev. Lut. Usu Kirkiku (Esthonian Evangelical Lutheran Church)
 - Lietuvos Ev. Reformatu Baznycia (Lithuanian Reformed Church)

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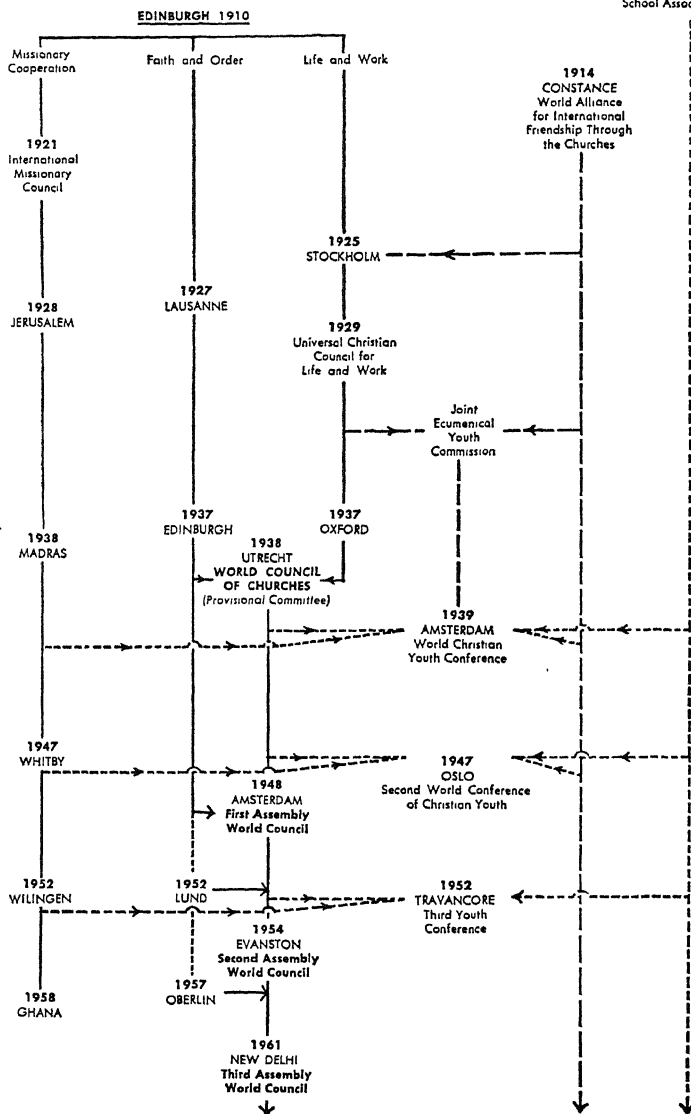
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Assemblies are held every 6 years — Amsterdam 1948; Evanston 1954.

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